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22 MAY 1968

JOHN KEATS

VOLUME II



PENCIL DRAWING OF KEATS BY CHARLES BROWN

From a photograph of the original drawing. Reproduced by permission of the National Portrait Gallery, London

JOHN KEATS

BY

AMY LOWELL

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME II



JONATHAN CAPE
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JOHN KEATS

VOLUME II

JOHN KEATS

CHAPTER VIII

A WALKING TRIP TO SCOTLAND

THE first day's drive carried the travellers through Exeter to Honiton, from which place Keats sent a short note back to Mrs. Jeffrey by the returning chaise. In it, he told her that Tom had "borne his Journey thus far remarkably well." Thus far, but no farther. On reaching Bridport the next day, Tom had a particularly severe hæmorrhage, which kept them prisoners in the inn there for some days. There is no means of knowing how long it was before Tom was able to resume the journey, for we have no letters between Keats's to Reynolds from Teignmouth on May third, and one from Tom to the Miss Jeffreys written from Hampstead on May seventeenth, when they had apparently been back for some time. However many the days were, they were terribly anxious and miserable ones for the two young fellows, caged up in a small town where they knew no single soul, with a strange doctor, and only such comforts as the Bull or the Green Lion (whichever inn they were at) could afford. At last, however, Tom was pronounced well enough to travel, and they started again, taking the journey by easy stages and, as far as we can judge, reaching Hampstead at the end of the fourth day. Tom's letter [1] to the Jeffrey girls, not before published, tells the story of the trip, and many other things of importance. It is too long and too discursive to print in

[1] Bemis Collection.

full, some parts of it, however, must be quoted; for one reason, because they give such a vivid picture of the writer:

"Hampstead Sunday.
May 1818.

MY DEAR MARYANN.

We received your Mother's Letter by Mrs. Atkins which prevented my writing so soon as I intended that the Letter might accompany the Book John promised you, and be delivered by Mrs. A. on her return. I thank you all for your kind solicitude. the rest of the journey pass'd off pretty well after we had left Bridport in Dorsetshire. I was very ill there and lost much blood — we travell'd a hundred miles in the last two days. I found myself much better at the end of the journey than when I left *Tartary* alias Teignmouth — the Doctor was surprised to see me looking so well, as were all my Friends — they insisted that my illness was all mistaken Fancy and on this presumption excited me to laughing and merriment which has deranged me a little — however it appears that confinement and low spirits have been my chief enemies, and I promise myself a gradual recovery — this will be grateful news to you. Our leave-taking was more formal than it might have been: and at the time I cursed the Doctor, but now I think it better as it happen'd — I was at the Window to stop you as you return'd from the Cottage, but you did not come our way — it did not require John's assurance to convince me that you felt our departure . . . I hope Mr. Stanbury &ct — is elated to twenty Pounds a year and that Waltzing will be admitted to the Teignmouth and other Town and Country Ball rooms in Sarah's time . . . Convey my compliments to Miss Michell and thank her for the present — remember me to Captain Tonkin and Mr. Bartlett if he should come your way in the Labyrinth of Teignmouth — tell Captain T. if he goes on his projected Tour to Italy we may perhaps meet — this leads me to a development of my plan which I am fond to think about if I should alter it. In [letter torn] weeks I shall be here alone and I hope well. John will have set out on his Northern Expedition George on this Western and I shall be preparing for mine to the South. John's will take four months at the end of that time he expects to

have atchieved two thousand Miles mostly on Foot. George embarks for America. — I shall either go by vessell to some port in the Adriatic or down the Rhine through Switzerland and the Alps into Italy most like the Town of Paiva [Pavia] — there to remain untill I have acquired a stock of Knowledge and strength which will better enable me to bustle through the world. I am persuaded this is the best way of killing time — now if I should go by vessell and the port of Plymouth has communication with that part I will take Teignmouth in my way thither and see you Once again = it will be some atonement for the abuse I have lavished on your Native Town. Till then I will bid you farewell. My love to your Mother and Sister . . .

Believe me Your Sincere Friend
THOS. KEATS.

P.S. George has been busily occupied in preparing for his Journey, they both desire their Love — perhaps John will write = he is also very much engaged with his friends."

This letter was posted on the following Tuesday. It is the postmark which has enabled me to give its exact date.

We have observed before that Keats, on returning to London from any sojourn anywhere, was invariably "very much engaged with his friends." The effect of being again among them this time was to make the mooted Scotch tour with Brown a settled fact. The life of learning withdrawn from the world could be put off for a bit. Intimate and sensible companionship was what he needed, and something a little exciting and unusual to take his mind off the difficulties which awaited him. First of these, of course, was Tom's desperate state of health. If Tom, with the usual optimism of the consumptive, thought himself capable of recovery, and even played with the idea of a solitary journey to Italy, John, with his medical training, can scarcely have been so deceived as to his brother's real condition. That he did not realize the full gravity of the

situation seems evident, but that he could find any real hope in it cannot be believed.

The second difficulty which Keats had to meet was the parting with George. To emigrate to America, in those days, meant virtually giving up one's friends and family for life; at least, if one were neither rich enough nor idle enough to snap one's fingers at the long and expensive ocean voyage which a trip to Europe entailed. When, added to this, the goal of the journey was one of the distant settlements being established in what was at that period the far West, then indeed were the travellers cut off from any but the most meagre intercourse with Europe.

George had found his opportunity, or thought he had, in deciding to take up an allotment of land either very near, or actually a part of, a settlement just being made by a certain Morris Birkbeck. Birkbeck was a Quaker, who had travelled in America and written a book on his experiences. He was known to backwoodsmen as the "Emperor of the Prairies," because he had bought sixteen thousand acres of public land at one purchase. This land he proposed to sell in parcels to prospective farmers, and his golden dreams for the success of his undertaking were duly and enticingly set forth in another small volume, *Letters from Illinois*, published in the same year, 1818. George Keats, having succeeded in getting from Abbey as much of his share of the money due him by inheritance as was free from legal restrictions, was preparing to sink it all in this American venture. How he expected to manage when he got there, is not clear. Trained to the business of selling tea and coffee wholesale, he had no other training whatever, knew nothing of agriculture, had no knowledge of horseflesh, no experience of woodcraft, was in fact as perfectly unfitted for life in a pioneer state as could well be. He had, however, determined courage, high hopes, and Georgiana Wylie; for, with remarkable insight, or with colossal ignorance of the conditions she would be called upon to face, Mrs. Wylie had

consented to an immediate marriage between her sixteen-year-old daughter and George, just turned twenty-one, and the prompt departure of the young couple for their distant bourne. That Georgiana Wylie should be willing to go and her mother to let her, was a matter of the utmost astonishment to the Keats circle. Mrs. Reynolds took no pains to conceal her surprise at such extraordinary imprudence. Many years later, George Keats, referring to this, wrote to Dilke:[1]

> "Altogether we have been as happy as mortals usually are, had Mrs. Wylie been as wise as Mrs. R[eynolds] she would have crushed in the bud a reasonable portion of human happiness, and there would not have been any little Keatses."

Dilke was the only one of his friends who thought George's American scheme right and proper, but George had abundant support from John, who backed him up to the last inch.

The marriage took place at the end of May. On May twenty-eighth, if we can take Keats literally when, writing to the Miss Jeffreys on June fourth, he says: "George took unto himself a Wife a Week ago."

The weeks preceding the wedding were hard ones for Keats. He was ill, as a recently discovered note proves, and it seems more than likely that the illness, of which we know so well the cause, was another sore throat. The note,[2] which is postmarked "2 o'Clock. 6 JN." is short and to the point:

> "My dear Severn,
>
> The Doctor says I mustn't go out. I wish such a delicious fate would put me in cue to entertain you with a Sonnet or a Poem. I am,
>
> Yours ever
> John Keats."

[1] Original letter in Author's Collection.
[2] Owned by Mrs. Roland Gage Hopkins of Brookline, Mass.

It did not need illness to depress him, however, George's going was enough. George's project, as detailed by John to Bailey, seems madder than ever. George, he says, has been out of employ for some time, and he has now decided "to emigrate to the back Settlements of America, become Farmer and work with his own hands, after purchasing 14 hundred Acres of the American Government." This enterprising and supremely ridiculous plan has, Keats goes on, his "entire Consent." Indeed Keats "would sooner he should till the ground than bow to a customer. There is no choice with him: he could not bring himself to the latter."

Here is the old nonsensical "pride" of the year before cropping up again. Poor George, he paid dearly for it in the end. But no matter for that now. What is important to us is the effect of his decision upon Keats. "I am now so depressed that I have not an idea to put to paper," the letter continues, "my hand feels like lead." Taking up the letter again a few days later, we see him in the same state of mind:

> "I have but a confused idea of what I should be about . . . I am in that temper that if I were under water I would scarcely kick to come up to the top — I know very well 'tis all nonsense. In a short time I hope I shall be in a temper to feel sensibly your mention of my book. In vain I have waited till Monday to have any Interest in that, or anything else. I feel no spur at my Brother's going to America, and am almost stony-hearted about his wedding."

Buxton Forman considers that this letter, the two parts of which are dated simply "Thursday," and "Monday," was written on May twenty-eighth and June first. But I own the holograph, and there is nothing on it to indicate the days of the month. It is quite evident, however, that the letter was written before George's wedding, and, in view of what Keats says of the date of that event in the letter of June fourth to the Jeffreys, I am certain that this

letter to Bailey was written on May twenty-first and May twenty-fifth.

Keats seems always to have been most generous and loyal in regard to the marriages of the people he loved. No selfish thought of himself and the loss he may sustain by such a change in conditions ever appears to have entered his head. I would not belittle the tolerant sympathy he showed on such occasions, but still I believe it to be a fact that, until his own time came, he had not the slightest inkling of the complete absorption of a man in love, the host of interests that engross a newly married man which no bachelor friend can possibly share. The few young couples whom he knew at this period had all been married long enough to be able to pay attention to other things besides the marvel of a dual existence, and Keats made friends with them as they were. As time went on, however, he grew to cling more and more to those of his friends who were still single, and even to comment a little wistfully upon the breaking up of his old set. In George's case, he simply had no idea that marriage could bring about any change in their relations. We know that he admired his sister-in-law; in this very letter to Bailey, he describes her as "of a nature liberal and high-spirited enough to follow him [George] to the banks of the Mississippi," and two weeks later, to the same correspondent, he enlarges upon the theme:

> "I had known my sister-in-law some time before she was my sister, and was very fond of her. I like her better and better. She is the most disinterested woman I ever knew — that is to say, she goes beyond degree in it. To see an entirely disinterested girl quite happy is the most pleasant and extraordinary thing in the world."

Georgiana Wylie being the woman she was, there can be no doubt that if she and George had remained in England things would have gone very differently with John.

Both materially and spiritually he would have had a stay which he sorely needed. Their going to America was a greater blow than he realized, although he realized it badly enough.

Keats's numbness and stony-heartedness was Nature protecting herself from what must otherwise have been an avalanche of emotion and revolt. But the numbness could not last, the protection was bound to break down, and by the tenth of June his barriers had all given way and he was overwhelmed. Again it is to Bailey that he opens his heart, and just because he believed Bailey to be so much more stable a character than himself. "You have all your life (I think so) believed everybody," he cries out in his misery, "I have suspected everybody." He rejoices that there is such a thing as death, and says he places his "ultimate in the glory of dying for a great human purpose." But his agony is upon him and will no longer be gainsaid:

> "I have two brothers; one is driven, by the 'burden of Society,' to America; the other with an exquisite love of life, is in a lingering state. My love for my Brothers, from the early loss of our parents, and even from earlier misfortunes, has grown into an affection 'passing the love of women.' I have been ill-tempered with them — I have vexed them — but the thought of them has always stifled the impression that any woman might otherwise have made upon me. I have a sister too, and may not follow them either to America or to the grave."

This is no mere despondence; the stark simplicity of the words has the chill ruthlessness of fact. It was all true, and worse even than he could foresee. The courage with which he dares look and express is admirable; and the poet in him, tortured and broken though he was, held true to his dedication, for the paragraph ends:

> "Life must be undergone, and I certainly derive some consolation from the thought of writing one or two more poems before it ceases."

Although the Scotch tour was a settled thing, Keats was not quite happy in his mind about it. We see this from his telling Bailey that he is not certain whether he shall be able to go on any journey "on account of my Brother Tom, and a little indisposition of my own."

It was certainly a very questionable proceeding to leave Tom alone in Hampstead, and Keats must have had a good deal of trouble in squaring his going with his conscience. But before we condemn him for his final decision, we must take into due consideration his morbid state, and think soberly of what the effect of his staying under the circumstances would have been on Tom. If he had been well and in good spirits, able in all respects to cheer Tom up and care for him, then certainly he should have stayed. But he was not well, and his spirits were at the lowest ebb. The chances are that, reasoning from the facts as he saw them, he did the wise thing in regard to Tom by going; for we must remember that he had no idea how ill Tom really was, and firmly believed that he himself should return from his trip quite rested and refreshed, and much better able to look after Tom during the Winter. Besides, Mrs. Bentley was a most reliable woman, the Dilkes were close by, and Haslam, Severn, Wells, and other good friends, were sure to keep Tom from feeling lonely. Severn and Haslam had been invited to be of the walking party, but had refused, Severn on account of lack of cash, Haslam probably for business reasons. Of course, Keats's decision to tramp about Scotland for two months was, as regards his own health, a ghastly blunder; but neither he nor the family doctor, Mr. Sawrey, had apparently the faintest conception that his "indisposition" had any underlying cause. He had a mere passing sore throat, that was all. In accepting Brown's invitation, Keats signed his doom, but he could not know that; and, indeed, with the general ignorance in regard to tuberculosis at the time, it is extremely doubtful whether the disease could have been stayed in any case.

Certain minor vexations also made Keats wish to get away. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and the *Quarterly Review* had just published fresh attacks on Hunt. In *Blackwood's*, Keats was lugged in under the outrageous soubriquet of "the amiable Mister Keats." The *Quarterly* article purported to be a review of Hunt's recently published *Foliage*. In this paper, Keats was not specifically mentioned, but both he and Shelley were covertly referred to. Keats remarks on the subject: "I have more than a laurel from the Quarterly Reviewers for they have smothered me in 'Foliage.'" That is all he has to say of the matter. These were flea-bites to his real sorrows, although he might have guessed that more was to come. Perhaps he did, but other thoughts pressed, and he was in no temper to dwell on possible complications of a literary kind. Then, too, Bailey had done a nice thing. He had written a very complimentary review of *Endymion* in the *Oxford Herald*. Keats was pleased, of course, but both too much preoccupied, and too wise in the knowledge that public praise from a friend often brings out violent refutations from enemies, to be much elated. He knew very well that the Edinburgh reviewers were merely biding their time.

The month after George's wedding was passed by Keats in as nearly normal a manner as he could compass. Tom seemed to be improving, and he and John acquired a habit of sitting on a bench opposite their lodgings at Well Walk, an occupation which reminded them of the Den at Teignmouth, where, by the same token, they were heartily glad not to be. One little glimpse of the newly married couple we have in an unpublished note[1] to Taylor from George sent from 29 Brunswick Square, where presumably they lodged after the wedding. In a postscript to the note, which is to thank Taylor for letters of introduction for America, George says:

[1] Author's Collection.

"Reynolds will be with me this Evening can you come, I think John likewise, you must see Mrs. Keats since you are physognomick and discover if the lines of her face answer to her spirit."

Half-past eleven on Monday morning, June twenty-second, saw George and his wife, Keats, and Brown, getting into, or mounting to the top of, the "Prince Saxe Cobourg" Liverpool coach, bound through Stony-Stratford, Lichfield, and the Potteries, and due to arrive at its destination in thirty-two hours precisely.

It was a bright, warm morning, with Midsummer Day a bare twelve hours gone by. We can fancy the spirits of the party. George elated; Georgiana excited, delighted, but a little tearful; John resolutely forgetting the approaching separation and forcing his mind to the pleasures of the coming trip, which, in the exhilaration of sunny air, swift motion, and constantly changing scene, became momently less difficult; Brown thoroughly cheerful and happy and full of amusing anecdote. The coach stopped at Redbourne for dinner, and there was Keats's old friend, Henry Stephens, having been advised by Keats of their coming, awaiting them in the porch of the Black Bull Inn.

Stephens was now in practice at Redbourne, and he and Keats had seen little or nothing of each other for nearly two years, but Keats had preserved a kindly recollection of him and was most anxious to introduce him to his new sister-in-law. Stephens, years afterwards, recorded his impression of her as he remembered it:

[1] "Rather short, not what might be called strictly handsome, but looked like a being whom any man of moderate sensibility might easily love. She had the imaginative poetical cast. Somewhat singular and girlish in her attire ... There was something original about her, and John seemed to regard her as a being whom he delighted to honour, and introduced her with evident satisfaction."

[1] Colvin.

All too soon for the chattering party, the guard blew his horn to warn all and sundry that time was up, and the travellers hurried out of the inn and started off once more on the long journey to Liverpool. Thirty-two hours of steady coaching was no joke, but these were all very young people, determined to find everything quite perfect that came in their way. And the sun did not set until after eight, with the long, lingering Midsummer twilight to follow. The moon was a waning one, not making its appearance until near midnight, but Jupiter was especially bright that year. Perhaps they went inside the coach, but I do not believe it; I believe these four gay young people (and we can suppose John the gayest of all by intention) rode all the way high on the top, and saw everything there was to be seen, and slept very little and very uncomfortably, which they would not admit, and found the second day as much to their liking as the first, until punctually at half-past seven o'clock on Tuesday evening the coach deposited them, a rather weary group, at the door of the Crown Inn in Liverpool. I imagine John going to bed, with his good spirits somewhat evaporated as the thought of the inevitable parting, now so near, obtruded itself, but with the serviceable Brown luckily on hand to keep the blue devils from engulfing him. After all, he was very tired, and Scotland was still ahead.

In those days, people did not book passages in London for a certain ship sailing at a certain hour on a certain day, and arrive at the port of embarkation just in time to step on board. Sailing ships were at the mercy of winds, tides, and various other circumstances. What people bound on a voyage did, whether they secured their accommodations ahead or not, was to travel to the place whence a ship would sail some time and wait until it did. Accordingly, when the George Keatses would sail was extremely problematical; and it had never been intended that Keats and Brown should wait and see them off. Brown, we may

be sure, was anxious to begin the walking part of the tour, and Keats would certainly have had too much sense to prolong a leave-taking which was so difficult and painful. The plunge into the future must be taken, and Keats plunged, with all the force of his character helping him on. It would have been wiser to rest a day after the long coach journey from London, but Keats, knowing his own mental condition, deemed otherwise. From Liverpool to Lancaster would be dull walking, it was therefore decided to begin the tour proper from that place.

Coaches to Lancaster left the Crown Inn at almost any hour, and taking one of the earliest of these, so early, in fact, that George was not up when they departed, the young men were whirled away from Liverpool, with its eternal rumbling drays, and forests of masts, and its atmosphere of salt and tar and the far-reaching contacts of trade. Keats had no idea when he should meet his brother and sister-in-law again. George he did see, two years later; but, with Georgiana, the parting at Liverpool was final. By the time she was able to return to England, Keats was dead. Probably no natural law is more merciful to man than that which prevents his seeing beyond the present. Blue, Keats certainly was, when the coach-wheels started to turn, but not so blue as to expect from fate any such bitter luck as this. In fact, the bridge of separation once crossed, his spirits, as is usual when one is young and events are interesting, began to rise. His letters during the early part of his trip show him in much better cue than for a long time previously.

Lancaster, when they reached it, offered the two eager young men no welcome at all. The town was all in a clatter over a coming election. In 1818, Lord Brougham undertook to contest the hitherto unchallenged supremacy of the great Lowther family by offering himself as Whig candidate for parliament for the county of Westmoreland. Such a state of things was unheard of, and the Tory party bristled

with rage and unwonted energy, doing all in their power to frustrate such an evil design. The Whigs, no whit behind their opponents in activity, were out in force, and the combination of so much righteous fire and indignation on both sides filled the town with an inconceivable amount of noise and bustle. The inns were full to overflowing. "Not a bed to be had," was the invariable answer which the travellers received. At last one of them relented to the extent of promising dinner, a meal for which Keats and Brown had to wait two hours. The problem of where to pass the night was finally solved by discovering a private house willing to take them in.

Here was an uncomfortable beginning indeed, but to Keats and Brown it was no beginning at all, merely a prolongation of the prologue. The beginning would be next day, and by sunrise they were ready for it. Four o'clock in the morning of Thursday, June twenty-fifth, found them dressed, knapsacks packed, but — it rained, rained cats and dogs. Being new to the weather, they set themselves to wait, whiling away the time with a volume of Milton which Brown had brought along. Keats's contribution to their joint library was the miniature *Dante* in three volumes, translated by the Reverend H. F. Cary, and "printed for the author" by J. Barfield, in 1814. These were the only books they had. But they had abundance of another requisite, each was well provided with pens, ink, and paper, and, for the rest, a change or two of socks, shirts, and handkerchiefs. That was as much as the knapsacks would hold or they could carry. The fact that they had no duplicate outer garments left them badly at the mercy of the elements, an inconvenience they had not considered.

Since the house where they lodged had not included food in its bargain, breakfast must be walked for. It was therefore eminently satisfactory when, at seven o'clock, the rain lightened to a Scotch mist. This was sufficient encourage-

ment to make them hurriedly strap on their knapsacks and set out. The trip was actually begun at last.

Four miles brought the pedestrians to Bolton-le-Sands, where they succeeded in getting breakfast, and the mist clearing away at noon, they had a pleasant afternoon's walk, which included their first real view. By the time they reached Burton-in-Kendal, the thought of dinner was by no means disagreeable, but Burton was no better able to accommodate them than Lancaster had been the day before. The landlord of the Green Dragon refused them, not only food, but even a room to sit in. His house was full of soldiers, he said, and he could give them nothing. The landlady of the King's Arms was in no better case, but of a kindlier disposition. Her loquacity made her at least more human. [1] "Ah, gentlemen!" she wailed, "the soldiers are upon us. The Lowthers had brought 'em here to be in readiness . . . Dear me, dear me! at this election time to have soldiers upon us, when we ought to be making a bit of money. Not to be able to entertain anybody. There was yesterday, I was forced to turn away two parties in their own carriages; for I have not a room to offer, nor a bed for any one. You can't sleep here, gentlemen, but I can give you a dinner." The sorely-burdened soul was as good as her word, for dinner they did get, but out they had to go after it in search of a lodging. They tried a public-house by the roadside with no sort of success, and as by this time the rain had come on again, things did not look very cheerful. At length, however, they found accommodation, such as it was, in a miserable little den of an inn in the village of End Moor.

Walking trips were very far from being the fashion in the early nineteenth century. The sight of two young men with knapsacks on their backs suggested pedlars to the

[1] From *Walks in the North during the Summer of 1818*, by Charles Armitage Brown. Published in the *Plymouth and Devonport Weekly Journal* in 1840. Day Collection.

rural mind, and here, at End Moor, a drunken old labourer made a clutch at Brown's knapsack, at the same time asking if he sold razors or spectacles.

The next day, Friday, took them through Kendal and beyond to a fine nine mile stretch on the way to Lake Windermere. This walk Brown describes in characteristic vein as follows:

> [1]"The country was wild and romantic, the weather fine, though not sunny, while the fresh mountain air, and many larks about us, gave us unbounded delight. As we approached the lake, the scenery became more and more grand and beautiful, and from time to time we stayed our steps, gazing intently on it. Hitherto, Keats had witnessed nothing superior to Devonshire; but beautiful as that is, he was now tempted to speak of it with indifference. At the first turn from the road, before descending to the hamlet of Bowness, we both simultaneously came to a full stop. The lake lay before us. His bright eyes darted on a mountain-peak, beneath which was gently floating on a silver cloud; thence to a very small island, adorned with the foliage of trees, that lay beneath us, and surrounded by water of a glorious hue, when he exclaimed: 'How can I believe in that? Surely it cannot be!' He warmly asserted that no view in the world could equal this, that it must beat all Italy; yet having moved onward but a hundred yards, catching the further extremity of the lake, he thought it 'more and more wonderfully beautiful.' The trees far and near, the grass immediately around us, the fern and furze in their most luxuriant growth, all added to the charm. Not a mist, but an imperceptible vapour bestowed a mellow, softened tint over the immense mountains on the opposite side, and at the further end of the lake."

Before we smile at Brown's "immense mountains" and Keats's conviction that this view of Lake Windermere must "beat all Italy," let us remember that Brown had hitherto seen nothing grander in the way of scenery than

[1] From Brown's published account.

Wales could offer, and that Keats's experience of the picturesque was limited to the Isle of Wight and the country-side about Teignmouth. To these two extremely untravelled young men, the charming views which the lake country constantly reveals, views which remind an American so strongly of bits of New Hampshire, were of an unparalleled magnificence. Such eye-peeps were tonic to Keats. He walked on air, and drank in what he saw in great gulps of joyous appreciation.

Arriving at Bowness, the travellers found an excellent and up-to-date inn, well furnished, and perfectly equipped for every event. The first thing they did was to row out on the lake and dip up some preserved trout for dinner; the next, was to have a good bath in the lake; and the last, to sit themselves down in the inn dining-room and dispatch the trout.

It is amusing to note that, in their enthusiasm for the simple life, they found the sophistication of the Bowness inn anything but admirable. Brown says:

> [1] "... we thought the many luxuries, together with the cold, civil, professional formality attending them, but ill accorded with the view from the window; nay, the curtains, furnished by some gay upholsterer, about that very window, might almost be construed into something like an affront."

After dinner, they once more took to the road, walking the six miles to Ambleside in a perfect trance of delight. Brown is most eloquent about this walk, but a single one of his many descriptions must serve us here. It is less garish than is usual with him, and for that very reason telling enough to produce an atmosphere. In it, we have the very spirit of the afternoon:

> "The wind had become fresh, waving the foliage and rippling the water, — the sound of which, together with the singing of the birds was perfect."

[1] From Brown's published account.

The sun came out as they approached Ambleside, firing the still hanging clouds to curvatures of gold and purple brilliance; and so they reached Ambleside and put up for the night.

Saturday was to be a day of rest, or at least they had decided not to tramp *on* that day, merely to tramp *about.* Somewhat less early than the inconceivably early hours at which they usually began the day, these indefatigable young persons sallied forth to see the sights. But these I prefer to let Keats describe, and it so happens that a fortunate accident has put into our possession a letter containing a detailed account of these first days of the tour, and in particular of this Saturday morning at Ambleside. This letter is none other than the first of the series of long journal letters, carried on from day to day and posted at convenient intervals, which Keats wrote to Tom during this Summer. The history of its discovery is among the curious happenings of literary fortune. Mr. Ralph Leslie Rusk, Assistant Professor of English at the University of Indiana, has lately been engaged upon a book on the literature of the Middle-Western frontiers. The course of his researches led him to the newspapers published in the frontier towns of the period, and among others consulted was the *Western Messenger*, published in Louisville, Kentucky. Going through the files of this paper, under the date of June, 1836, Professor Rusk suddenly stumbled upon a communication from George Keats, which proved on examination to be a letter from the poet to his brother Tom. The opening of the letter was not given, but otherwise it appeared to have been copied in full. That there must have been such a letter, was evident from the farther correspondence, but it had been supposed to be lost, as probably the original is by now, yet for nearly ninety years this faithful copy of it had slumbered unmolested where no one had had the wit to look for it. Professor Rusk realized instantly what he had found, and transcribed the letter in

full, and then, with admirable generosity, permitted it to be printed in the *North American Review* with a few most interesting comments by himself.

The value of Professor Rusk's discovery is greatly enhanced by the supreme importance of the letter itself. For it ranks as one of the best of the Scotch letters, and certainly the one in which Keats's power of prose description is most in evidence. It was begun on the evening of the first day's walk, continued at Bowness on the following day, and finished at Ambleside after breakfast on Saturday. I print it here by permission of Professor Rusk and the editor of the *North American Review.*

[1] "Here beginneth my journal, this Thursday, the 25th day of June, Anno Domini 1818. This morning we arose at 4, and set off in a Scotch mist; put up once under a tree, and in fine, have walked wet and dry to this place, called in the vulgar tongue Endmoor, 17 miles; we have not been incommoded by our knapsacks; they serve capitally, and we shall go on very well.

June 26 — I merely put *pro forma*, for there is no such thing as time and space, which by the way came forcibly upon me on seeing for the first hour the Lake and Mountains of Winander — I cannot describe them — they surpass my expectation — beautiful water — shores and islands green to the marge — mountains all round up to the clouds. We set out from Endmoor this morning, breakfasted at Kendal with a soldier who had been in all the wars for the last seventeen years — then we have walked to Bowne's [Bowness] to dinner — said Bowne's situated on the Lake where we have just dined, and I am writing at this present. I took an oar to one of the islands to take up some trout for our dinner, which they keep in porous boxes. I enquired of the waiter for Wordsworth — he said he knew him, and that he had been here a few days ago, canvassing for the Lowthers. What think you of that — Wordsworth versus Brougham!! Sad — sad — sad — and yet the family has been his friend always. What can

[1] Quoted from the *North American Review*, March, 1924.

we say? We are now about seven miles from Rydale, and expect to see him to-morrow. You shall hear all about our visit.

There are many disfigurements to this Lake — not in the way of land or Water. No; the two views we have had of it are of the most noble tenderness — they can never fade away — they make one forget the divisions of life; age, youth, poverty and riches; and refine one's sensual vision into a sort of north star which can never cease to be open lidded and stedfast over the wonders of the great Power. The disfigurement I mean is the miasma of London. I do suppose it contaminated with bucks and soldiers, and women of fashion — and hat-band ignorance. The border inhabitants are quite out of keeping with the romance about them, from a continual intercourse with London rank and fashion. But why should I grumble? They let me have a prime glass of soda water — O they are as good as their neighbours. But Lord Wordsworth, instead of being in retirement, has himself and his house full in the thick of fashionable visitors quite convenient to be pointed at all the summer long. When we had gone about half this morning, we began to get among the hills and to see the mountains grow up before us — the other half brought us to Wynandermere, 14 miles to dinner. The weather is capital for the views, but is now rather misty, and we are in doubt whether to walk to Ambleside to tea — it is five miles along the borders of the Lake. Loughrigg will swell up before us all the way — I have an amazing partiality for mountains in the clouds. There is nothing in Devon like this, and Brown says there is nothing in Wales to be compared to it. I must tell you, that in going through Cheshire and Lancaster, I saw the Welsh mountains at a distance. We have passed the two castles, Lancaster and Kendal.

27th — We walked here to Ambleside yesterday along the border of Winandermere all beautiful with wooded shores and Islands — our road was a winding lane, wooded on each side, and green overhead, full of Foxgloves — every now and then a glimpse of the Lake, and all the while Kirkstone and other large hills nestled together in a sort of grey

black mist. Ambleside is at the northern extremity of the Lake. We arose this morning at six, because we call it a day of rest, having to call on Wordsworth who lives only two miles hence — before breakfast we went to see the Ambleside waterfall. The morning beautiful — the walk early among the hills. We, I may say, fortunately, missed the direct path, and after wandering a little, found it out by the noise — for, mark you, it is buried in trees, in the bottom of the valley — the stream itself is interesting throughout with 'mazy error over pendant shades.' Milton meant a smooth river — this is buffetting all the way on a rocky bed ever various — but the waterfall itself, which I came suddenly upon, gave me a pleasant twinge. First we stood a little below the head about half way down the first fall, buried deep in trees, and saw it streaming down two more descents to the depth of near fifty feet — then we went on a jut of rock nearly level with the tsecond [sic] fall-head, where the first fall was above us, and the third below our feet still — at the same time we saw that the water was divided by a sort of cataract island on whose other side burst out a glorious stream — then the thunder and the freshness. At the same time the different falls have as different characters; the first darting down the slate rock like an arrow; the second spreading out like a fan — the third dashed into a mist — and the one on the other side of the rock a sort of mixture of all these. We afterwards moved away a space, and saw nearly the whole more mild, streaming silverly through the trees. What astonishes me more than anything is the tone, the colouring, the slate, the stone, the moss, the rock-weed; or, if I may so say, the intellect, the countenance of such places. The space, the magnitude of mountains and waterfalls are well imagined before one sees them; but this countenance or intellectual tone must surpass every imagination and defy any remembrance. I shall learn poetry here and shall henceforth write more than ever, for the abstract endeavour of being able to add a mite to that mass of beauty which is harvested from these grand materials, by the finest spirits, and put into ethereal existence for the relish of one's fellows. I cannot think with Hazlitt that these scenes make man appear little.

> I never forgot my stature so completely — I live in the eye; and my imagination, surpassed, is at rest — We shall see another water-fall near Kydal [Rydal] to which we shall proceed after having put these letters in the post office. I long to be at Carlisle, as I expect there a letter from George and one from you. Let any of my friends see my letters — they may not be interested in descriptions — descriptions are bad at all times — I did not intend to give you any; but how can I help it? I am anxious you should taste a little of our pleasure; it may not be an unpleasant thing, as you have not the fatigue. I am well in health. Direct henceforth to Post Patrick [Port Patrick] till the 12th July. Content that probably three or four pairs of eyes whose owners I am rather partial to will run over these lines I remain; and moreover that I am your affectionate brother JOHN."

In his comment on the letter, Professor Rusk opens up an engaging problem. The passage in which he does so, I will quote:

> "In its relation to the poems of Keats, this part of his journal is rivalled in significance by only a few of his other letters. One must be struck especially by the remarkable passage which is perhaps reminiscent of the opening lines of *Endymion* and is certainly suggestive of both the thought and the imagery of the 'Bright Star' sonnet: the views he and Brown had had of Windermere were 'of the most noble tenderness — they can never fade away — they make one forget the divisions of life; age, youth, poverty and riches; and refine one's sensual vision into a sort of north star which can never cease to be open lidded and steadfast over the wonders of the great Power.' Though the resemblance between this passage and *Endymion*, certainly more a matter of thought than of words, is possibly only fanciful, something more must be said for its relation to Keats's 'last' sonnet."

It has been known for some time that the so-called "last" sonnet was by no means such, having been written in 1819.

Professor Rusk suggests that it may have been written even earlier, possibly, indeed, when Keats wrote this letter to Tom. Professor Rusk commits himself so far as to say: "The passage in the journal makes it extremely likely that at least the first part of the famous sonnet was already in Keats's mind when he explored the shores of Windermere on June 26, 1818." This is ingenious reasoning, but leaves out the witness of psychology, for a close study of Keats's state of mind at the time shows him as quite out of the mood in which the sonnet was written. What his mood at the moment was, Professor Rusk had not adequate means of knowing, but we may clearly see. For a hitherto unpublished letter to George contains two poems, one written that same evening, the other on the following day, and both are as unlike in tone to the sonnet as could be imagined. I do believe, however, with Professor Rusk, that this letter has a close connection with the "last" sonnet; but what this connection is, I shall wait until we reach the time when I feel sure it was written to consider. At the end of Professor Rusk's article is a bit of criticism so trenchant and true, so exactly in accordance with the facts, that I wish to set it down here, in his words. Referring to Keats's sentence: "I shall learn poetry here and shall henceforth write more than ever," Professor Rusk adds: "Here, for once, he realized his desire to forget his own harassing personality and live in the eye alone."

It should be pointed out that Keats did not mean that he should write more poetry "here," but that the beautiful and imposing scenes he was witnessing would in themselves teach him much about poetry, and from the memory of them stored away in his brain poetry was sure to come. His remark: "My imagination, surpassed, is at rest" must be noted. It is a touchstone to the creative temperament.

The letter to Tom breaks off with the early morning's adventures; for those of the rest of the day, I shall again let Keats be his own spokesman. At the moment, it is

sufficient to say that after taking in all that the locality had to offer, the travellers determined to get on a little, and did so by proceeding to Wytheburn, a little village at the foot of Helvellyn, which they hoped to climb the next morning. Here Keats wrote what seems to have been his second letter. This second letter[1] has never before been printed, so far as I know, I therefore give it entire. It is addressed to "Mr. George Keats. Crown Inn. Liverpool," and is postmarked "Keswick" and "Liverpool." But George had sailed before the letter arrived, and it was returned to John, who has endorsed it "To be sent to George."

"Foot of Helvellyn June 27.

MY DEAR GEORGE:

We have passed from Lancaster to Burton from Burton to Enmoor, from Enmoor to Kendal from Kendal to Bownes. On turning down to which place there burst upon us the most beautiful and rich view of Winanda mere and the surrounding Mountains — we dined at Bownes on Trout which I took an oar to fetch from some Box preserves close on one of the little green Islands. After dinner we walked to Ambleside down a beautiful shady Lane along the Borders of the Lake with ample opportunity for Glimpses all the way. We slept at Ambleside not above two miles from Rydal the Residence of Wordsworth. We arose not very early on account of having marked this day for a day of rest. Before breakfast we visited the first waterfall I ever saw and certainly small as it is it surpassed my expectation, in what I have mentioned in my letter to Tom, in its tone and intellect its light and shade slaty Rock, Moss and Rock weed — but you will see finer ones I will not describe by comparison a teapot spout. We eat a Monstrous Breakfast on our return (which by the way I do every morning) and after it proceeded to Wordsworth's. He was not at home nor was any Member of his family. I was much disappointed. I wrote a note for him and stuck it up over what I knew must be Miss Wordsworth's Portrait,

[1] Author's Collection.

and set forth again and we visited two Waterfalls in the neighbourhood, and then went along by Rydal Water and Grassmere through its beautiful Vale — then through a defile in the Mountains into Cumberland and so to the foot of Helvellyn whose summit is out of sight four Miles off rise above rise. I have seen Kirkstone, Loughrigg and Silver How — and discovered without a hint 'that ancient woman seated on Helm Craig.' This is the summary of what I have written to Tom and dispatched from Ambleside. I have had a great confidence in your being well able to support the fatigues of your Journey since I have felt how much new Objects contribute to keep off a sense of Ennui and fatigue. 14 miles here is not so much as the 4 from Hampstead to London. You will have an inexhaustible astonishment; with that and such a Companion you will be cheered on from day to day. I hope you will not have sail'd before this Letter reaches you — yet I do not know for I will have my series to Tom copied and sent to you by the first Packet you have from England. God send you both as good Health as I have now. Ha! my dear Sister George I wish I knew what humour you were in that I might accomodate myself to any one of your amiabilities. Shall it be a Sonnet or a Pun or an Acrostic, a Riddle or a Ballad — 'perhaps it may turn out a Sang, and perhaps turn out a Sermon.' I'll write you on my word the first and most likely the last I ever shall do, because it has struck me — what shall it be about.

Give me your patience Sister while I frame
Enitials verse-wise of your golden name:
Or sue the fair Apollo and he will
Rouse from his slumber heavy and instill
Great love in me for thee and Poesy.
Imagine not that greatest Mastery
And Kingdom over all the realm of verse
Nears more to Heaven in aught than when we nurse
And surety give to Love and Brotherhood.

Anthropophagi in Othello's mood,
Ulysses stormed, and his enchanted Belt

Glow with the Muse but they are never felt
Unbosom'd so, and so eternal made,
Such selfsame incense in their Laurel shade
To all the regent sisters of the Nine
As this poor offering to thee Sister mine.

Kind Sister! Aye this third name says you are
Entranced has it been the Lord knows where.
All may it taste to you like good old wine.
Take you to real Happiness and give
Sons daughters and a Home like honied hive.

June 28. I have slept and walked eight miles to Breakfast to Keswick on derwent water. We could not mount Helvellyn for the mist so gave it up with hopes of Skiddaw which we shall try tomorrow if it be fine — to day we shall walk round Derwent water, and in our Way see the Falls of Low-dore. The approach to derwent water is rich and magnificent beyond any means of conception — the Mountains all round sublime and graceful and rich in colour. Woods and wooded Islands here and there — at the same time in the distance among Mountains of another aspect we see Bassenthwaite [page torn] drop like a hawk on the Post Office at Carlisle [torn] some letters from you and Tom.

Sweet sweet is the greeting of eyes,
And sweet is the voice in its greeting,
When Adieux have grown old and goodbyes
Fade away where old time is retreating

Warm the nerve of a welcoming hand
And earnest a Kiss on the Brow.
When we meet over sea and o'er Land
Where furrows are new to the Plough.

This is all [torn] in the [torn] please [torn] Letters as [torn] We will before many years are over have written many folio volumes which is a Matter of self-defence to one whom you understand intends to be immortal in the

best points and let all his sins and peccadillos die away. I mean to say that the Booksellers will rather decline printing ten folio volumes of Correspondence printed as close as the Apostles creed in a Watch paper. I have been looking out my dear Georgy for a joke or a Pun for you. — there is none but the Names of romantic Misses on the Inn window Panes. You will of course have given me directions Brother George where to direct on the other side of the Water. I have not had time to write to Henry [1] — for I have a journal to keep for Tom nearly enough to employ all my leisure. I am a day behind hand with him. I scarcely know how I shall manage Fanny and two or three others I have promised. We expect to be in Scotland in at most three days so you must if this should catch you before you set sail give me a line to Port-Patrick.

God Bless you my dear brother and sister,

JOHN."

John never did send this letter to George. The only part of it which crossed the ocean was the acrostic on his sister-in-law's name, "Georgiana Augusta Keats," which he copied into a letter written in the Autumn of 1819, introducing it by saying: "I wrote it in a great hurry which you will see. Indeed I would not copy it if I thought it would ever be seen by any but yourselves." The acrostic is little worse than such *tours-de-force* usually are. It was a "stunt" tossed off for fun. The other poem in this letter is an unlucky find on my part; it has never been in print before. I say unlucky, because, while the scheme of this book makes it imperative that I sedulously put in whatever verse I discover which is certainly by Keats and has not heretofore been published, regardless of its merits, this poem is so singularly poor that poetically nothing would have been lost had it remained in oblivion. Keats was quite aware of this; he did not copy it into the letter which contained the acrostic. What little interest it has, lies in the fact that it shows Keats already solacing himself with the thought of

[1] Mrs. George Keats's brother.

meeting. The past he has put definitely behind him, and he is already planning for the future. But, indeed, the whole letter is so different in tone from those sent to Bailey from Hampstead that we see quite clearly what a stabilizing effect the tramp was having upon him. He was thoroughly interested in everything he saw. The kind of country he was walking through was new to him, the life of the pedestrian tourist equally so. Even the sound, dog-tired sleeps, and the big breakfasts, were doing him good. That this early part of the tour was really productive of good, is an evidence of what an unusually strong man he was meant by nature to be; for we must never forget that already tuberculosis had begun its insidious work and such strenuous days could only have hastened its action. Keats was perfectly cognizant of the why and wherefore of his raised spirits and his pleasant sense of well-being. When, in the letter, he comments upon the fact of novelty serving to banish ennui and fatigue, for "ennui" we may read "despondence." For the time being, he was high cockalorum, and Brown was a first-rate companion to keep up his mood.

As the letter has told us, Sunday morning dawned with a Scotch mist. It had rained in the night, and not only was the going bad, but Helvellyn was all in cloud; there was no possibility of any view from it, so the travellers, comforting themselves with the thought of Skiddaw to come, tugged on to Keswick, eight long miles, to breakfast. That meal dispatched, and the weather clearing somewhat, they walked round Derwent Water and went to see the Fall of Lodore in which they were rather disappointed, finding it neither so large nor so torrential as they had expected. Keats wrote his impressions of it the next day to Tom as follows:

> "I had an easy climb among the streams, about the fragments of Rocks, and should have got I think to the summit, but unfortunately I was damped by slipping one

leg into a squashy hole. There is no great body of water, but the accompaniment is delightful; for it oozes out of a cleft in perpendicular Rocks, all fledged with ash and other beautiful trees. It is a strange thing how they got there. At the South end of the Lake the Mountains of Borrowdale are perhaps as fine as anything we have seen."

Keats, it will be observed, mentions no tree specifically but the ash. It will be remembered how, two years before, he had been intrigued by the thought of a mountain ash.[1] Here, then, he saw ash-trees and took keen note of the fact, probably harking back in his mind, as we are doing, to his early preoccupation with the species.

After dinner, Brown and Keats fagged up hill (the expression is Keats's) to the old Druid remains on the road to Penrith, which gave Keats much pleasure. These two scenes, the tree-clustered mountains over Lodore, and the broken circle of Druidical stones, were afterwards utilized by Keats in the *Ode to Psyche* and *Hyperion*. Brown's account of the day is far fuller and more florid than Keats's and, in considering this, Sir Sidney Colvin makes a very true observation. Since I can in no wise better what he says, I will quote the passage somewhat abridged:

[2] "Keats in his own letters says comparatively little about the scenery, and that quite simply and quietly, not at all with the descriptive enthusiasm of the picturesque tourist ... Partly, no doubt, a certain instinctive reticence ... keeps him from fluent words on the beauties that most deeply moved him: his way rather is to let them work silently in his being until at the right moment, if the right moment comes, their essence and vital power shall distil themselves for him into a phrase of poetry. Partly, also, the truth is that an intensely active, intuitive genius for nature like his hardly needs the stimulus of nature's beauties for long or at their highest power, but on a minimum of experience can summon up and multiply for itself spirit sunsets, and glories of dream lake and moun-

[1] See Vol. I, p. 217. [2] *Life of John Keats*, by Sir Sidney Colvin.

> tain, richer and more varied than the mere receptive lover of scenery can witness and register in memory during a lifetime of travel and pursuit."

I am very grateful to Sir Sidney for that passage, it contains a profound truth not at all understood by the generality of men. Keats's mind and observation worked with lightning-like rapidity. The impression was received, registered, and done with, in an instant's time. Another point to be made is that Keats belonged among the few who can receive almost as vivid impressions of scenery from verbal descriptions as they can from actual scenes. A hint to go upon and he could actually see whatever the author he happened to be reading had seen. There had to be a hint — I doubt if anybody could imagine the sea who had never beheld it in actual fact; but having seen the sea anywhere, he could imagine it everywhere. Mountains, Keats had never seen, hence his exclamation on the road to Bowness: "How can I believe in that?"; on the other hand, I think the ash-trees at Lodore appeared positively familiar.

The two young fellows were very tired that night, yet their eagerness pulled them out of bed at four the next morning to go up Skiddaw. The day seemed propitious, and as they had every hope of finding themselves at the top in sunshine, they set out with a guide. Here again I shall let Keats tell the story of the climb as he did to Tom in the letter I have already quoted:

> "It promised all along to be fair, and we fagged and tugged nearly to the top, when, at half-past six, there came a Mist upon us, and shut out the view. We did not, however, lose anything by it: we were high enough without mist to see the coast of Scotland — the Irish Sea — the hills beyond Lancaster — and nearly all the large ones of Cumberland and Westmoreland, particularly Helvellyn and Scawfell. It grew colder and colder as we ascended, and we were glad, at about three parts of the way, to taste a little rum which the Guide brought with him, mixed,

> mind ye, with Mountain water. I took two glasses going and one returning. It is about six miles from where I am writing to the top. So we have walked ten miles before Breakfast to-day. We went up with two others, very good sort of fellows. All felt, on arising into the cold air, that same elevation which a cold bath gives one — I felt as if I were going to a Tournament."

That last touch is the very essence of poetry — sharp bodily and mental sensation distilled to one perfect, unexpected phrase.

The folly of a ten-mile climb up and down on empty stomachs is evident; but our two young men were not wise, they were merely enthusiastic. From this time on, we hear a good deal about fatigue in Keats's letters; Brown could stand anything, it seems. What urgent need they had to make so much haste cannot be guessed. There was, so far as we can see, no reason for all the hurry; but they might have been stung by the famous tarantula and doomed to perpetual motion from the speed with which they eternally went on. On this occasion they do seem to have remained at Keswick long enough to eat their breakfasts, and for Keats to write part of his letter to Tom, but in the afternoon they pushed on past Bassenthwaite Water to Ireby, where they came to a halt for the night.

At the inn at Ireby they found a dancing-school in full swing. A lot of lusty young peasants were romping about under the guidance of an itinerant dancing-master. Keats says: "they kickit and jumpit with metal extraordinary, and whiskit, and friskit, and toed it, and go'd it, and twirl'd it, and whirl'd it, and stamped it, and sweated it, tattooing the floor like mad." Keats delighted in it, this was something new. And these were people; the human nature belonging to the place, engaged in an activity which had nothing to do with the travellers. They were people spied on in the intimacy of pastime, and this was an experience which had been decidedly lacking to the trip so far.

Such local colouring was just what his mood needed. He was intelligent enough to wish to see more of a country than its scenery. Here is a significant passage, once more to Tom:

> "There was as fine a row of boys and girls as you ever saw; some beautiful faces, one exquisite mouth. I never felt so near the glory of Patriotism, the glory of making by any means a country happier. This is what I like better than scenery. I fear our continued moving from place to place will prevent our becoming learned in village affairs: we are creatures of Rivers, Lakes, and Mountains."

Keats had "got" the country, he needed no more of it; but he very much wanted to "get" the people. Still, of course, there was no time. Through Wigton to Carlisle they proceeded next day, and found that town, when they reached it, a very dull place. "The whole art of yawning might have been learned there," Brown declares. Most dutifully, however, they saw all there was to be seen, which did not impress them. Keats says: "The Cathedral does not appear very fine — the Castle is very ancient, and of brick . . . I will tell you anon whether the inside of the cathedral is worth looking at." Apparently it was not, for no farther information on the subject is vouchsafed Tom, who is told instead: "We have now walked 114 miles, and are merely a little tired in the thighs and a little blistered." In view of the blisters, we can suppose that it was no unwelcome news to be told that there was nothing much to see between Carlisle and Dumfries and they had better coach the thirty-eight miles between the two towns. This they accordingly did, and fairly crossed the border into Scotland on Wednesday, July first. Keats liked the country they passed through on the way not at all. His description of it is curiously effective and vivid. "I know not how it is," he writes, "the Clouds, the Sky, the Houses, all seem anti-Grecian and anti-Charlemagnish." This is

pure reaction, but it is also a reversion to type. Keats loved the idea of Southern lands, sunny, bright-coloured, gay; he also loved the age of chivalry, with knights pacing through lonely forests, and grim castles perched on crags whose battlemented walls shone crimson in the sunset, whence the glare of torches by night cheered the wayfarer in the valley below. The Scottish border offered only low hills and flat stretches, and a sort of nostalgia for his old worlds of romance beset him as he travelled through it. Brown tells us that they left "the wonders of Cumberland and Westmoreland . . . without a touch of regret." In Keats's case, the wonder had been worn bare, and his very fatigue called up his old, enchanting visions with a kind of mockery as though to tell him that no matter what he might see, and do, and admire, at bottom he was always irretrievably himself.

Reaching Dumfries in time for dinner, they sallied out in the afternoon to see Burns's tomb. That, and his feelings of the morning, gave Keats a sonnet. It is not a little interesting and important to find that this sonnet, *On Visiting the Tomb of Burns*, is in the Petrarchan form. Psychologically, we instantly see why. The South and chivalry were his early loves. Coming back to them as a tired child to his mother, he comes back to the sonnet form in which he had been accustomed to write until a few months before. Critics have pondered much upon this unexpected return to the Petrarchan mode. But does not the reason lie embedded in the passage in his letter from Dumfries to Tom in which he copies this sonnet? And, after all, what is the sonnet but an expression of his spleen.

On Thursday, the travellers visited the ruins of Lincluden College in the morning, and after that fate called a short halt. Keats's coat had sprung a leak in the seams from the rubbing of his knapsack and repairs were instantly necessary, for, as Keats wrote to his sister Fanny, "I have but one Coat to my back in these parts." So off the coat

went to the tailor's, and by the time it was returned "fortified at all points" it was too late to think of reaching Kirkcudbright that night. They therefore went no farther than the village of Dalbeattie.

For some unknown reason, it was the habit of this tarantula-bitten pair not to breakfast where they had passed the night, probably because their very early starts made the getting of breakfast a difficulty only to be overcome by extra payments, which they were loath to make. On Friday, therefore, they decided to breakfast at Auchencairn, a village eight miles from Dalbeattie. The way thither was particularly pleasant, with continuous views of mountains and sea, and this eight mile walk was a fortuitous one for Keats. Brown's account[1] of it contains this interesting passage:

> "For the most part, our track lay through corn-fields, or skirting small forests. I chatted half the way about Guy Mannering, for it happened that Keats had not then read that novel, and I enjoyed the recollection of the events as I described them in their own scenes. There was a little spot, close to our pathway, where, without a shadow of a doubt, old Meg Merrilies had often boiled her kettle, and, haply cooked a chicken. It was among fragments of rock, and brambles, and broom, and most tastefully ornamented with profusion of honeysuckle, wild roses and fox-glove, all in the very blush and fulness of blossom."

Keats had little interest in Scott's novels, we have seen how he felt about the *Antiquary*,[2] and it is characteristic of him that, of all Brown told him, what really made an impression was the character and appearance of Meg Merrilies, the gypsy. The type of landscape drove her in upon him, as it were. He could not escape her. After breakfast at Auchencairn, as he and Brown occupied a brief rest in writing letters, suddenly Brown's attention was caught by the fact that the lines of Keats's letter were not running in

[1] See Note, Vol. II, p. 17. [2] See Vol. I, p. 507.

regular prose, and on Brown's asking what he was doing, Keats told him that he was writing a ballad about Meg Merrilies for Fanny. Brown immediately demanded it to copy into his journal. This Keats permitted, at the same time protesting that the poem was "too much a trifle to be copied." [1] He copied it himself, however, in a letter which he then and there began to Tom.

It is faint praise to say that this ballad is far and away the best thing that Keats did during his Scotch tour. It is much more than this, being indeed, to my thinking, one of his very best poems. It stands unique in his work. Neither before nor after is there any such attempt at ballad form, nor any such lyrico-dramatic presentation of a character. It ranks with *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* as the sole example of a type of poetry which Keats would assuredly have tried his hand at again and again had he lived. These two pieces, entirely diverse in *genre* though they are, do, in fact, seem to prove that Keats was not only not written out at the time of his death, but that he had already found, and slightly practiced, two utterly different, but for him perfectly new, ways in which to write. They are evidences of the diversity and richness of his genius, and of his passion for experiment and the breaking out of untrodden paths. The ballad form is as old as the hills, but it was new to Keats, and this ballad is not really in an old mode. Prosodically, it follows the rules; psychologically, it is as fresh as the *Ancient Mariner*, and that was saying much in 1818. It is what we may call up-to-date, considering the period; while *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* is more than this, for it is the essence and precursor of the whole pre-Raphaelite school.

Friday night saw Keats and Brown at Kirkcudbright, from which place Keats wrote into his letter of the morning to Fanny the nonsense verses *There was a naughty Boy*. Part of these verses I have already quoted.[2] On Saturday,

[1] From Brown's published account. See Note, Vol. II, p. 17.
[2] See Vol. I, p. 35.

July fourth, they seem to have gone as far as Newton Stewart, and from thence, on Sunday, the fifth, to Glenluce. Here let me say that it is a little difficult to apportion the days correctly during this part of the trip. Brown in his published account makes no divisions, and the dates of Keats's letters are extremely hard to follow, since he frequently goes on from one day to another, not only without changing the date, but without beginning a new paragraph. If Keats's date[1] in a letter to Tom can be taken as evidence, they left Glenluce on Monday, July sixth, *en route* for Stranraer, "going round to see some rivers: they were scarcely worth while." Having seen the rivers and been disappointed in them, they were proceeding on their way in a burning sun, "when" says Keats, "the Mail overtook us: we got up, and were at Port Patrick in a jiffey." At Port Patrick they crossed immediately in the packet to Donaghadee. From an old diary of my grandfather's, who took somewhat the same trip as Keats a year later, in 1819, I learn that the crossing was accomplished in four hours. But that was on a rough day. How long it took Keats, we have no means of knowing, but the passage was made pleasant to him by hearing two old men sing ballads. At Donaghadee, they stopped for the night, and were gratified to hear that the Giant's Causeway, to see which they had come to Ireland, was only forty-eight miles distant; they had feared it seventy.

At first glance, there seemed to be considerable to be said in favour of Ireland over Scotland. Keats's opinion on the subject, sent to Tom, is interesting and, although admittedly superficial, contains more than a grain of truth:

[2] "I can perceive a great difference in the nations, from

[1] In the letter as published, the date of writing is given as July sixth; but in the holograph in the possession of James Freeman Clarke, Esq. of Boston, it is very clearly written "July 7." Immediately after this date, Keats says: "Yesterday morning we set out from Glen Luce."

[2] Copied from the original letter in the possession of James Freeman Clarke, Esq. of Boston, Mass. to whose grandfather it was given by George Keats.

the chambermaid at this *nate tun* kept by Mr. Kelley. She is fair, kind, and ready to laugh, because she is out of the horrible dominion of the Scotch Kirk. A Scotch girl stands in terrible awe of the Elders — poor little Susannah's, they will scarcely laugh, they are greatly to be pitied, and the Kirk is greatly to be damned. These Kirk-men have done Scotland good.[1] They have made old men, young men; old women, young women; boys, girls and infants all careful — so they are formed into regular Phalanges of savers and gainers. Such a thrifty army cannot fail to enrich their Country, and give it a greater appearance of Comfort than that of their poor Irish neighbours. These Kirk-men have done Scotland harm; they have banished puns, and laughing, and kissing, &c. (except in cases where the very danger and crime must make it very fine and gustful.) I shall make a full stop at kissing, for after that there should be a better parenthesis, and go on to remind you of the fate of Burns — poor unfortunate fellow, his disposition was Southern — how sad it is when a luxurious imagination is obliged, in self-defence, to deaden its delicacy in vulgarity and riot in things attainable, that it may not have leisure to go mad after things that are not. No man, in such matters, will be content with the experience of others. It is true that but of sufferance there is no greatness, no dignity, that in the most abstracted pleasure there is no lasting happiness. Yet who would not like to discover over again that Cleopatra was a Gipsy, Helen a rogue, and Ruth a deep one? . . . We live in a barbarous age — I would sooner be a wild deer, than a girl under the dominion of the Kirk; and I would sooner be a wild hog, than be the occasion of a poor Creature's penance before those execrable elders."

The theory of the baneful effect of inhibitions had not been heard of when Keats wrote that passage, and yet how clearly and succinctly he has summed it up! His understanding of Burns's case is, considering the period, simply extraordinary. Nowhere better than in this passage do we

[1] So in the original; probably Keats omitted "no" by mistake, or else intended to put a question mark at the end of the sentence.

have an insight into Keats's essentially modern mind. People before Keats's day had advocated lust and license, but who else at the time had indicated any possibly valid reasons for them. In those days, lust was lust and license license; who advocated them did so because he was willing to snap his fingers at the devil and make hay while the sun shone. But Keats, while not advocating, condones with a reason, a pitiful reason which our age alone has ever comprehended.

The next day, Tuesday, the travellers set out for Belfast, a twenty-two mile walk, during which Keats saw enough of the state of the country to disillusion him not a little. He was struck with the "worse than nakedness, the rags, the dirt and misery of the poor common Irish." "A Scotch cottage," he exclaims, "is a palace to an Irish one." The young men floundered through a Peat-bog "three miles long at least — dreary, black, dank, flat and spongy" and saw "poor dirty Creatures and a few strong men cutting or carting peat." And he cries "What a tremendous difficulty is the improvement of the condition of such people. I cannot conceive how a mind '*with child*' of philanthropy could grasp at [the] possibility."

At Belfast, Keats and Brown discovered that the forty-eight miles were Irish ones, equalling seventy English miles, and this capped the climax of their disgust. They also found that prices at Irish inns were about three times those of Scotland. All this was too much, and back they footed it next day to Donaghadee. On their return walk, they encountered an old hag smoking a pipe, being carried along in what Keats calls "the worst dog-kennel you ever saw" by a couple of ragged girls. Keats, who observed everything, describes her as "looking out with a round-eyed, skinny-lidded inanity; with a sort of horizontal idiotic movement of the head."

Reaching Donaghadee, they took the daily packet for Port Patrick, and there passed the night of Wednesday,

July eighth. Keats, who had been disappointed in receiving no letters on his arrival at Port Patrick two days before, repaired to the Post Office again, and we can imagine his feelings — he who hated soldiers — when the postmaster snapped out "What regiment?"

The two friends, not too well pleased with their experiences, left Port Patrick, it would seem, on July ninth, and repaired to Stranraer, and from thence to Cairn and Ballantrae. The road from Cairn gave them much pleasure, and both Keats and Brown wax eloquent about it. Finally, on climbing up a considerable ascent, they caught sight of Ailsa Rock fifteen miles out to sea. This great mass of stone, heaved up out of the waves to a grim and solitary grandeur, greatly moved Keats. He tells Tom:

> "The effect of Ailsa with the peculiar perspective of the Sea in connection with the ground we stood on, and the misty rain then falling gave me a complete Idea of a deluge. Ailsa struck me very suddenly — really I was a little alarmed."

The first sentence of that passage is excessively interesting, for Keats sees with the vision of a painter, but of no painter of his time. It is no early nineteenth century European picture that he gives us here, but a Japanese colour print. Even the suggestion of perspective does not mar the effect, which is, I think, given by his speaking of the misty rain falling between him and the Rock and sea. In colour and form the scene is absolutely Japanese. Any one who is familiar with Hiroshige's *Night Rain at Karaski*, one of the *Eight Views of Lake Biwa*, with its veil of dropping rain half obscuring a gigantic pine-tree, will understand what I mean. Keats, of course, was totally ignorant of Japanese art. For three hundred years, Japan had been sealed to all foreigners except a few Portuguese traders, and even these were allowed no farther than an island off Nagasaki. Yet that John Keats saw landscape from the same angle as the

great masters of Ukio-ye, a close student of his letters cannot fail to be aware.

Toward the end of the day, the misty rain turned into a regular downpour, and the soaked couple hurried down to Ballantrae extremely eager for food and shelter. The landlord of the inn at Stranraer, where they seem to have breakfasted, had told them "not to go to the Post Chaise inn, as things might not be quite comfortable there, because the landlord was a little in trouble." "A little in trouble!" exclaims the irate Brown, "he had been just taken up for being concerned in robbing the Paisley bank." The inn they were forced to go to in consequence was very poor, and the wind blowing up a gale soon turned the rain into a violent storm. During the evening, Keats wrote a decidedly clever attempt at a Scotch ballad in dialect, because Brown wanted to fool the antiquary Dilke by sending it to him as a *bona fide* Galloway song. The subject Keats took from a wedding party they had encountered on the road. The ballad is, as I say, a clever imitation, yet Keats was right in observing "but it won't do." This sort of thing was not his business, and a tyro could have spotted it at once, for all its ingenuity, as not done by a Scotchman. Meanwhile the storm was increasing in fury minute by minute. All night the miserable little building in which they were, shook, and squeaked, and groaned, clapping its windows and rattling its doors, with the result that neither Keats nor Brown got a wink of sleep. It was rather a bedraggled pair, therefore, who set forth next day to walk the thirteen miles to Girvan. But the rain at least had stopped, and at Girvan they found, says Keats with appreciation, "comfortable quarters."

Their usual day's mileage was about twenty miles, but the good inn at Girvan tempted them to fare no farther that day. Instead, Keats wrote a sonnet on Ailsa Rock. There seems to have been something about this part of Scotland which made it, to Keats's thinking, unsympa-

thetic to the Shakespearian form of sonnet. Of course, there is no reason why a poet should not write in both the Petrarchan and Shakespearian modes, using either at will. In Keats's case, he seems to have employed them during this Summer almost at haphazard. If any clue can be found, it appears to lie in the associations which the two forms carried with them, rather than in any sense of fitness in the subjects themselves. It is, perhaps, pushing possibilities somewhat far to suggest that the sonnet *To my Brother George*, written at Margate in 1816, and the sonnet *On the Sea*, written at Carisbrooke in 1817, have a certain thematic connection with *Ailsa Rock*. This is a point to be glanced at merely, nothing more.

Keats calls *To Ailsa Rock* "the only Sonnet of any worth I have of late written." It does, in fact, come near to being a very fine sonnet, but the confusion and obscure phrasing of the octave prevent the general effect from being what it should be. The sestet contains the proud lines:

> ". . . thou art dead asleep;
> Thy life is but two dead eternities —
> The last in air, the former in the deep;
> First with the whales, last with eagle-skies —"

The final two lines, however (which I do not quote), are weak and inadequate, and drop the tone once more.

Saturday morning was begun with the usual trudge to breakfast, this time of eight miles to Kirkoswald. In the short rest which the travellers always seem to have allowed themselves after breakfast, Keats continued his letter to Tom begun at Ballantrae, and again his theme is the difference between the Scotch and Irish characters; it is amusing here to see that Keats was so thorough-going an Englishman as to experience considerable difficulty in understanding the Irish, although at the same time noting with much shrewdness certain of their prominent traits. He is careful to say that he is speaking of the common people only, as

he knows nothing of the higher classes. His analysis, which I give entire, is:

> "As to the 'Profanum vulgus' I must incline to the Scotch. They never laugh — but they are always comparatively neat and clean. Their constitutions are not so remote and puzzling as the Irish. The Scotchman will never give a decision on any point — he will never commit himself in a sentence which may be referred to as a meridian in his notion of things — so that you do not know him — and yet you may come in nigher neighbourhood to him than to the Irishman who commits himself in so many places that it dazes your head. A Scotchman's motive is more easily discovered than an Irishman's. A Scotchman will go wisely about to deceive you, an Irishman cunningly. An Irishman would bluster out of any discovery to his disadvantage. A Scotchman would retire perhaps without much desire for revenge. An Irishman likes to be thought a gallous fellow. A Scotchman is contented with himself. It seems to me they are both sensible of the Character they hold in England and act accordingly to Englishmen. Thus the Scotchman will become over grave and over decent and the Irishman over-impetuous. I like a Scotchman best because he is less of a bore — I like the Irishman best because he ought to be more comfortable. — The Scotchman has made up his Mind with himself in a sort of snail shell wisdom. The Irishman is full of strongheaded instinct. The Scotchman is farther in Humanity than the Irishman — there he will stick perhaps when the Irishman will be refined beyond him — for the former thinks he cannot be improved — the latter will grasp at it forever, place but the good plain before him."

Scotchman — Irishman — here we have them in most excellent silhouette. Nobody who knows the two races will deny the verisimilitude of this portrayal; but there is a third nationality which peeps out of the background of the picture — that of the Englishman who has drawn it. For Keats is here perfectly generic; if he is indubitably himself in the expression of his opinions, these same opinions, even

to the being "puzzled" and "dazed" and finding Irish repartee a bore, are conclusively English. They bear the stamp of their origin for all to see.

Fearful of missing anything, our eager tourists stretched out the four miles to Maybole by going out of their way to see a couple of ruins, one of them Crossraguel Abbey, where Keats was struck with "a winding Staircase to the top of a little Watch Tower." But this was all mere dalliance by the way, a rambling preliminary to the cottage where Burns was born. For Keats was determined that this cottage was to be one of his shrines. Writing to Reynolds from Maybole, he says:

> "I am approaching Burns's cottage very fast . . . One of the pleasantest means of annulling self is approaching such a shrine as the Cottage of Burns — we need not think of his misery — that is all gone, bad luck to it — I shall look upon it hereafter with unmixed pleasure as I do upon my Stratford-on-Avon day with Bailey."

The event, when it came, was not quite the perfect and thrilling joy he had expected. But the expectation was so keen that onward the friends went from Maybole to reach Ayr that night. Keats had expected Ayrshire to provide him with no sensation other than that received from Burns's cottage. In this he was agreeably disappointed. "O prejudice!" he cries, having found a kind of country of which he had not dreamed, "it was as rich as Devon." The approach to Ayr he considered "extremely fine — quite outwent my expectations — richly meadowed, wooded, heathed and rivuleted — with a grand Sea view terminated by the black Mountains of the isle of Annan." This view set him wondering how it was that such a prospect "did not beckon Burns to some grand attempt at Epic." Here, for once, his perspicacity failed him, for he should have realized that Burns was not of the epic temper.

Keats's description of the entrance to Ayr is so vivid that I will transcribe it:

> "We came down upon everything suddenly — there were on our way the 'bonny Doon,' with the Brig that Tam o' Shanter crossed, Kirk Alloway, Burns's Cottage, and the Brigs of Ayr. First we stood upon the Bridge across the Doon; surrounded by every Phantasy of green in Tree, Meadow, and Hill, — the stream of the Doon, as a Farmer told us, is covered with trees 'from head to foot' — you know those beautiful heaths so fresh against the weather of a summer's evening — there was one stretching along behind the trees."

This Keats wrote to Reynolds. In another account, sent to his brother Tom, he calls the Doon "the sweetest river I ever saw — overhung with fine trees as far as we could see."

At last came the Cottage! The mystic shrine which was to live in his memory forever as the generator of a pleasure little short of absolute. Poor Keats! He took no note of the fact that to receive such an impression as he craved, to undergo the keen sensations for which he was hungering, demands a physical energy powerful enough to respond to the given stimulus. But here he was, at the end of a long day during which he had traversed something over twenty-one miles on foot. He may not have felt tired, but clearly he was, so tired that his nerves were on edge, and the garrulous old caretaker at the cottage — whose garrulity, by the way, being in the broadest Scotch, made his gossip almost incomprehensible — nearly drove him mad. This old caretaker had known Burns, and his remarks might have been interesting, but somehow Keats did not find them so in the main. "Damn him and damn his anecdotes — he was a great bore," is Keats's harassed comment. So he puts it to Tom; to Reynolds, he is more explicit:

> "We went to the Cottage and took some Whisky. I wrote a sonnet for the mere sake of writing some lines

under the roof — they are so bad I cannot transcribe them. The Man at the Cottage was a great Bore with his anecdotes — I hate the rascal — his life consists in fuzz, fuzzy, fuzziest. He drinks glasses five for the Quarter and twelve for the hour [1] — he is a mahogany-faced old Jackass who knew Burns. He ought to have been kicked for having spoken to him . . . O the flummery of a birthplace! Cant! cant! cant! It is enough to give a spirit the guts-ache. Many a true word, they say, is spoken in jest — this may be because his gab hindered my sublimity: the flat dog made me write a flat sonnet."

A watched pot never boils, and forced poetry usually does no more than crawl along the ground of prose on its belly. It was foolishness extraordinary to set his fagged brain to work composing poetry when he was in no mood for it. But we have already noticed [2] his constant desire to write in places whose associations intrigued him. He was under no illusion as to the merit of his sonnet, as this passage shows, and he says the same thing to Tom: "I was determined to write a sonnet in the Cottage — and I did — but it was so bad I cannot venture it here." Before a week was over, he had torn it up, but not before Brown had copied it, a fact which he seems not to have known.

Considering the connection in his mind between Burns's cottage, and Shakespeare's house at Stratford-on-Avon, it is not strange to find that this sonnet is written in the Shakespearian form. Rossetti thought the sonnet "a fine thing," and Lord Houghton was of the opinion that "The local colour is strong in it . . . and its geniality would have delighted the object of its admiration." I find it none of these things, but on the contrary laboured and impatient; indeed I think one of its lines:

"Fancy is dead and drunken at its goal"

aptly describes it. But what really upset Keats about it

[1] Misquoted from Coleridge's *Christabel*. [2] See Vol. I, p. 552.

was that he intended it to be, not full of local colour, not reminiscent of "Willie brewed a peck o' mau't," but a tribute to those sides of Burns which transcended his mortal frailties, and from this point of view the sonnet is a dead failure.

The next two days were spent in getting to Glasgow. The journey seems to have been broken at Kilmarnock, for Keats tells Reynolds that the rain has stopped them at the end of a dozen miles, and on Monday, July thirteenth, he writes from Kingswell to Tom. Kingswell is nine miles beyond Kilmarnock by the old coach road, and the wayfarers probably stopped there for breakfast or dinner, as they were certainly in Glasgow that night, which was twelve miles farther on. In tracing Keats's route and the things he did in Scotland, it is important to remember that meal-times were divided very differently in 1818 from what they are now. Keats and Brown seem to have started the day at about five in the morning, as we have seen, breakfastless. The ordinary breakfast hour of the period was about nine A.M., dinner was partaken of at three or four, and a third meal, which Keats usually calls "tea," but which most of the world called "supper," came along quite late, generally at nine in the evening. The long Summer days in a latitude so far North as Scotland meant that it was light until far into the evening, even in London in July twilight does not end until eleven P.M. On Monday, July thirteenth, 1818, the sun did not set until after eight o'clock. It was probably, therefore, in full daylight that Brown and Keats "entered Glasgow last evening under the most impressive Stare a body could feel." This was written on July fourteenth, so we know that Glasgow was reached on Monday, the thirteenth.

The two dusty young fellows, with their obvious air of having walked long and far, seem to have greatly intrigued those Glaswegians who happened to encounter them that evening. Keats says: "When we had crossed the Bridge

Brown look'd back and said its whole pop[ulation] had turned [out] to wonder at us," and he tells of a drunken man who declared that "he had seen all foreigners bu-u-ut he never saw the like o' me," and was only shaken off by being threatened with the police. That they were a queer looking pair can be clearly seen by Brown's description of himself sent in a letter to Mr. Dilke senior. "An odd fellow," he calls himself, "and moreover an odd figure; imagine me with a thick stick in my hand, the knapsack on my back, 'with spectacles on my nose,' a white hat, a tartan coat and trowsers, and a Highland plaid thrown over my shoulders! Don't laugh at me, there's a good fellow, although Mr. Keats calls me the Red Cross Knight, and declares my own shadow is ready to split its sides as it follows me." Keats wore a plaid and a fur cap — this last a sufficiently odd choice in head-gear for the middle of Summer, he says that he only met one other such throughout his travels — and he also carried the inevitable and mystifying knapsack.

The next morning they saw the cathedral — "they have devilled it into 'High Kirk,'" remarks Keats with pungent emphasis — and presumably went on their way in the afternoon; but at this point the days become confused, and we can only state that they followed the banks of the Clyde to Dumbarton, and from there turned due North to Loch Lomond. Here the sight of the solitary steam-boat which plied to and fro on the lake for the benefit of tourists, and the carriages of sightseers on its shores, brought forth from Keats the very natural complaint: "Steam Boats on Loch Lomond and Barouches on its sides take a little from the Pleasure of such romantic chaps as Brown and I." Going along up the West side of Loch Lomond, they seem to have reached Tarbet on Wednesday evening, July fifteenth. Of this part of the Lake, Keats says:

> "The north end of Loch Lomond grand in excess — the entrance at the lower end to the narrow part from a little

distance is precious good — the Evening was beautiful nothing could surpass our fortune in the weather — yet was I worldly enough to wish for a fleet of chivalry Barges with Trumpets and Banners just to die away before me into that blue place among the mountains."

Here follows a sketch, which Sir Sidney Colvin recognizes as taken from a spot near Tarbet.

Tarbet Inn was the usual point of departure for an ascent of Ben Lomond, but this most lauded excursion Keats and Brown did not make, the price of a boat across the lake and a guide up the mountain proving sufficient deterrents. Here, indeed, the pedestrians were in the route of fashionable excursionists, and prices were according to the traffic, which in the height of Summer was considerable. Doubtless the two young men did not have the appearance of being over prolific in tips, and things were not made easy for them. My grandfather records in his journal an experience which gives us a clear idea of the hierarchy of travellers in the eyes of Scotch innkeepers of the period. Passing over the same route which Keats had just traversed, but in inverse order, my grandfather posted a part of the way. The result of this method of travelling was, he declares, that "at every inn where we alighted, there were six waiters and as many chambermaids, to help us out of the chaise. Had we been coach passengers, we should at most have seen of these worthies little more than their backs." As the greater part of my grandfather's journey was made by coach, he knew whereof he spoke. The hierarchy aforesaid consisted, first and foremost, of people in their own carriages; second, of post-chaise travellers; and third, of coach passengers. Wayfarers on foot were neither expected nor welcomed, and we may be certain that in this much frequented part of the Highlands Keats and Brown met with scant consideration.

Thursday, July sixteenth, seems to have been partly spent in strolling about the shores of Loch Lomond, for

Keats consoles himself for not going up Ben Lomond by the fact of "a half a day of rest being quite acceptable." It is interesting to note, as between the man of his period and the man ahead of his period, that my grandfather's account of this country is all asterisked over with quotations from Walter Scott's poems, while Keats never once alludes to them in any way.

As if to make up for the unwonted rest, by four the next morning Keats and Brown were up and off, intending to breakfast at the top of a glen nine miles on their road, where Brown's Itinerary mentioned a place called "Rest and be thankful." Arrived at the spot, to their dismay it turned out to be, not an inn, as they had assumed, but a stone seat, so they were obliged to foot it another five miles through another "Tremendous Glen" to what Keats calls "Cairn-something," which was probably what is now the Cairndow Hotel at the Head of Loch Fyne. Fourteen miles is a pretty stiff tramp before breakfast, but the effort had not been without its compensations. The glens were beautiful in the extreme, and coming through Glenside, says Keats, "it was early in the morning and we were pleased with the noise of Shepherds, Sheep and dogs in the misty heights close above us — we saw none of them for some time, till two came in sight creeping among the Crags like Emmets, yet their voices came quite plainly to us." It is in passages such as this that we see Keats's sensitiveness to impressions, which I have so often insisted upon, at its highest pitch. Nothing pertinent to the creation of atmosphere escaped him, and it is just these sudden flashes which make the Scotch letters interesting.

At Cairndow, the wanderers made their usual after-breakfast pause, during which Keats took a bath in Loch Fyne and got badly stung by gad-flies, an experience which produced from his irate soul a set of doggerel stanzas on the gad-fly. He also began a letter to Tom. Late in the afternoon, the friends rounded the top of Loch Fyne and

proceeded to Inverary, where they stopped for the night. On the way thither, they passed the Duke of Argyle's castle, which, with its surroundings, Keats describes in two words — another of his swift, sure tricks of delineation:

> "The Duke of Argyle's Castle is very modern magnificent and more so from the place it is in — the woods seem old enough to remember two or three changes in the Crags about them — the Lake was beautiful and there was a band at a distance by the Castle. I must say I enjoyed two or three common tunes — but nothing could stifle the horrors of a solo on the Bag-pipe — I thought the beast would never have done."

One might suppose that the day had contained enough to satisfy even the insatiable ardour of twenty-two. By no means. Seeing a play bill as they entered the town, which announced to all and sundry that that most beloved piece of the period, *The Stranger*, was to be performed in a near-by barn, Keats, leaving Brown who was "knocked up from new shoes" to repose in the inn, repaired thither and witnessed the well-known play to the intermittent accompaniment of another bagpipe. Famous though the play was, Keats had never seen it before, had not even read it, and his modernity and good taste are much in evidence in his criticism of it. "Not the Bag-pipe," he exclaims, "nor the wretched players themselves were little in comparison with it — thank heaven it has been scoffed at lately almost to a fashion." The bagpipe and *The Stranger* set Keats off upon an ironic sonnet, usually known as *On Hearing the Bag-pipe*, composed either that night or the next morning. The irony is enhanced by his choosing for it the Shakespearian form.

The next day, Saturday, July eighteenth, Brown's feet were in such a state that walking was not to be thought of, but he and Keats were consoled by the arrival of a thunderstorm which would have prevented them from going on in

any case. Keats spent the day in letter writing, first to Tom and then to Bailey.

This letter to Bailey is extremely important, for it reveals a side of Keats on which he is usually peculiarly reticent, but which seems to have occupied him not a little at the time. Before coming to that, however, there is another little flash of self-revelation, which, as he wrote it, was part actual fact, part camouflage, and part undoubtedly a persuasion of himself that what he wished had indeed happened. To understand the significance of the passage, we must remember two things. The first is the letter from Burford Bridge to Bailey in which Keats speaks of his changing moods;[1] the second is the letter of June tenth to the same correspondent, that terrible letter of grief and discouragement, written just after George's marriage, in which Keats gazed open-eyed at the future and saw only misery ahead.[2] Evidently Keats's confession of himself had greatly distressed Bailey. What Bailey had said to him about the matter, we do not know, but this is certainly his reply to it:

> "And here, Bailey, I will say a few words written in a sane and sober mind, a very scarce thing with me, for they may, hereafter, save you a great deal of trouble about me, which you do not deserve, and for which I ought to be bastinadoed. I carry all matters to an extreme — so that when I have any little vexation, it grows in five minutes into a theme for Sophocles. Then, and in that temper, if I write to any friend, I have so little self-possession that I give him matter for grieving, at the very time perhaps when I am laughing at a Pun. Your last letter made me blush for the pain I had given you — I know my own disposition so well that I am certain of writing many times hereafter in the same strain to you — now you know how far to believe in them. You must allow for Imagination. I know I shall not be able to help it."

That Keats understood himself quite well in this par-

[1] See Vol. I, p. 524. [2] See Vol. II, p. 10.

ticular, we have seen again and again — so much for the actual fact of the passage; that George's departure for America for life and Tom's serious illness could come under the head of "little vexations" even to his changed mood, it is ridiculous to suppose, this making light of events and his own past expressions in regard to them is the part which I have called camouflage, and leads us to the persuasion of himself which I have said is also here. The Scotch tramp had been tonic, and the bracing in nerves and point of view which he had undergone had certainly dulled the acuteness of his misery, but that he had been as entirely cured of his melancholy as he appears by his words to be is not likely, much as he wished to believe it. It was happily overlaid for the moment, and he had no wish to probe himself on the subject.

For the second, more important revelation, we must again recollect back and remind ourselves of Keats's growing irritation with the Reynolds girls.[1] He had felt it before his departure for Devonshire, and it would appear from this letter to Bailey that on his return to Hampstead he had found himself so out of love with them as practically to give up going to the Reynoldses' house. That Reynolds himself was as much his friend as ever, we know; and there is no sign that Reynolds resented his behaviour. Not so Bailey, who seems to have remonstrated vigorously with Keats on his altered attitude. A nice bit of irony, had Keats but been able to see into the future, for Bailey was about to submit to an alteration in his own attitude toward the Reynoldses, and Marianne in particular, much more dire than that of Keats could ever be.[2] When Keats was writing this letter from Inverary, Bailey's grand defection had probably taken place; but of this, Keats knew nothing.

Keats's answer to Bailey's strictures is as follows:

[3] "I am sorry you are grieved at my not continuing my

[1] See Vol. I, p. 587. [2] See Vol. I, pp. 478–479.

[3] This passage differs slightly from the printed version, having been corrected from the original letter in my possession.

visits to Little Britain. Yet I think I have as far as a Man can do who has Books to read and subjects to think upon — for that reason I have been no where else except to Wentworth Place so nigh at hand — moreover I have been too often in a state of health that made me think it prudent not to hazard the night air. Yet, further, I will confess to you that I cannot enjoy Society, small or numerous. I am certain that our fair friends are glad I should come for the mere sake of my coming; but I am certain I bring with me a vexation they are better without. If I can possibly at any time feel my temper coming upon me I refrain even from a promised visit. I am certain I have not a right feeling towards women — at this moment I am striving to be just to them, but I cannot. Is it because they fall so far beneath my boyish Imagination? When I was a schoolboy I thought a fair woman a pure Goddess; my mind was a soft nest in which some one of them slept, though she knew it not. I have no right to expect more than their reality — I thought them ethereal above men — I find them perhaps equal — great by comparison is very small. Insult may be inflicted in more ways than by word or action. One who is tender of being insulted does not like to think an insult against another. I do not like to think insults in a lady's company — I commit a crime with her which absence would not have known. Is it not extraordinary? — when among men, I have no evil thoughts, no malice, no spleen — I feel free to speak or be silent — I can listen, and from every one I can learn — my hands are in my pockets, I am free from all suspicion and comfortable. When I am among women, I have evil thoughts, malice, spleen — I cannot speak, or be silent — I am full of suspicions, and therefore listen to nothing — I am in a hurry to be gone. You must be charitable and put all this perversity to my being disappointed since my boyhood. Yet with such feelings I am happier alone among crowds of men, by myself, or with a friend or two. With all this, trust me — Bailey I have not the least idea that men of different feelings and inclinations are more short-sighted than myself. I never rejoiced more than at my Brother's marriage, and shall do so at that of any of my friends. I must absolutely get over this — but

how? the only way is to find the root of the evil, and so cure it 'with backward mutterings of dissevering power' — that is a difficult thing; for an obstinate Prejudice can seldom be produced but from a gordian complication of feelings, which must take time to unravel, and care to keep unravelled. I could say a good deal about this, but I will leave it, in hopes of better and more worthy dispositions — and also content that I am wronging no one, for after all I do think better of womankind than to suppose they care whether Mister John Keats five feet high likes them or not.[1] You appear'd to wish to avoid any words on this subject — don't think it a bore my dear fellow, it shall be my Amen."

Of course Keats's *malaise* in the presence of women was merely the reverse of a ripening sexual instinct. Such *mauvaise honte* is a very common phenomenon of adolescence. Most boys experience something of the sort at about sixteen. Keats's peculiarity is that, with him, it held off until he was twenty-two, and, coming so late, found a brain and senses so far matured beyond it as to give the instinct itself a touch of tragedy by presenting it to the consciousness all tangled up with thoughts, and reflections, and introspections, which the boy in his 'teens is happily without. There is undoubtedly truth in Keats's belief that his love for his Brothers had prevented any woman from making a deep impression upon him, as he had told Bailey some six weeks before;[2] but it is also true that Keats had to mature many sides of himself. We have seen his progress from boyhood. We have watched, first, the growth of his poetical power, then, later, the development of his thinking capacity, his quality of reasoning, the increase of his intellectual curiosity. The last part of his personality to come to man's estate was the sexual. Fleeting sexual attractions, he had known; but he had always been clear headed enough to recognize their superficiality. Intellectually he had perfectly apprehended

[1] See Vol. I, p. 96. [2] See Vol. II, p. 10.

the dual quality of love, as I have shown in my analysis of *Endymion*, but when in actual life the significance of woman as the corresponding sex presented itself to him, he failed to recognize what was happening. With the banishment of momentary lust as a sufficient satisfaction, what he received in compensation was not the realization of any specific need for love in its entirety as embodied in any known woman, but a sudden suspicion of all women because of his altered awareness of them, shorn as this was of the corrective of strong individual attraction. The stage was being set for Fanny Brawne, although of such a condition in himself he had no idea. Sexual psychology was not in the least understood a century ago. The quasi-knowledge of the subject possessed by other and older civilizations had long been lost. Keats's utter ignorance of what was the matter with him seems strange in this super-sexualized beginning of the twentieth century, when every school-boy babbles Freud, and, if we think we know much more than we do, at least no young person is likely to consider a given condition as not due to the sexual instinct when it is. If Keats had been able "to find the root of the evil," he would have been much better equipped to cope with his love for Fanny Brawne when it came; but this root was just what he could not find. Sex, the world understood; but not the connection of sex with mental phenomena. So Keats groped, shocked at himself, and remained in ignorance, confessing everything to Bailey as was his wont — Bailey, the last man who could help him under the circumstances. Bailey, as Keats said later, loved like a ploughman, and pursued the changing objects of his desire with a satyr-like lack of deviousness. At the time of Keats's writing, his last quarry had fallen into his arms, and he was, if not yet the accepted, certainly the encouraged, lover of Miss Gleig.

As a sort of addenda to what he considered his prejudiced view of womankind, Keats wrote immediately after it:

> "I should not have consented to myself these four months tramping in the highlands, but that I thought it would give me more experience, rub off more prejudice, use to more hardships, identify finer scenes, load me with grander mountains, and strengthen more my reach in Poetry, than would stopping at home among books, even though I should reach Homer."

Probably he was right; but one can have too much of anything, and fatigue is a great discountenancer. That his eager response to the scenery was becoming a little dulled by habit, can be seen in this sentence:

> "By this time I am comparatively a Mountaineer. I have been among wilds and mountains too much to break out much about their grandeur. I have fed upon oat-cake — not long enough to be very much attached to it. — The first mountains I saw, though not so large as some I have seen since, weighed very solemnly upon me. The effect is wearing away — yet I like them mainly."

Keats was a gallant and loyal soul, and it never seems to have crossed his mind that the trip for him had passed its meridian and that to continue it was, considering the coarse and monotonous food which was all that was obtainable in the roadside taverns on the way, an imprudence. He was pledged for the Summer to Brown and pedestrianism, and had no intention of changing his plans. His digestion began to suffer, and no wonder. On Sunday, July nineteenth, the friends trudged twenty miles down the side of Loch Awe; Brown, with his feet blistered, scarcely able to walk. Where they spent the night, we do not know, but their supper consisted of eggs and oat-cake. "We have lost the sight of white bread entirely," bemoans Keats; and, concerning the supper, he exclaims: "Now we had eaten nothing but Eggs all day — about 10 a piece and they had become sickening." Things were not always as bad as this, on Monday they managed to procure "a small

Chicken and even a good bottle of Port" somewhere, but Keats admits "all together the fare is too coarse — I feel it a little." Still the walk had been beautiful: "We had come along a complete mountain road, where if one listened there was not a sound but that of Mountain Streams," writes Keats, and "The approach to Loch Awe was very solemn towards nightfall — the first glance was a streak of water deep in the Bases of large black mountains." Nearing the sea, Keats once again becomes enthusiastic: "the distant Mountains in the Hebrides very grand, the Salt-water Lakes coming up between Crags and Islands full tide and scarcely ruffled." They also saw "an Eagle or two." "They move about without the least motion of Wings when in an indolent fit," his always alert observation announces.

Monday night seems to have been passed, for a wonder, in a comfortable inn, but where it stood is not stated. How comfortable this inn was, we can infer by its furnishings, among which was a table, "a nice flapped Mahogany one." "There is a Gaelic Testament on the Drawers in the next room," Keats adds, and does not fail to notice that "White and blue China ware has crept all about here." This last is an illuminating touch, and gives us the period in a nutshell. For where was the inn or well-to-do farmer's house throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to which the blue and white pottery plates of the indefatigable Wedgwood had not penetrated. They were a symbol of the period, although, of course, the period never looked upon them in any such light.

Reaching Oban on Tuesday, the twenty-first, in a soaking rain, their first thought was that here was the place to embark for the Island of Staffa, where was Fingal's Cave which they were most anxious to see, the more so, undoubtedly, because they had missed the Giant's Causeway. On making inquiries, however, they found once again that

this was a popular excursion, and the boat price in consequence had mounted to the extortionate sum of seven guineas. This was a baffler, and they reluctantly decided to give up Staffa and go straight on next day to Fort William. Having come to this decision, they were ruefully trying to digest it, when in came one of the men of whom they had been making inquiries. This astute person suggested that the cheapest way to reach Staffa was to take the ferry which ran between Oban and the Island of Kerrara, and at Kerrara shift to another ferry plying from Kerrara to Mull. He offered himself as guide across the latter island, at the Southwestern end of which, he declared, a boat could be hired for the short distance to Staffa and back. After some haggling, a bargain was struck, and the next day, Wednesday, the friends and their optimistic guide ferried, first to Kerrara, and then to Mull, the last crossing of nine miles being accomplished "in forty minutes with a fine Breeze."

Mull was almost totally unfrequented by travellers, the trip to Staffa and return being usually made entirely by water, in the boat of prohibitive prices. Their first day's experience is described by Keats to Tom thus:

> "The road through the Island, or rather the track, is the most dreary you can think of — between dreary Mountains — over bog and rock and river with our Breeches tucked up and our Stockings in hand. About eight o'Clock we arrived at a shepherd's Hut into which we could scarcely get for the Smoke through a door lower than my shoulders. We found our way into a little compartment with the rafters and turf thatch blackened with smoke — the earth floor full of Hills and Dales. We had some white Bread with us, made a good supper and slept in our Clothes in some Blankets."

The following morning, July twenty-third, they walked six miles to a place set down by Keats as Dun an cullen, which both Buxton Forman and Sir Sidney Colvin think

may have been Derrynacullen. Here Keats began another letter to Tom, and finished the one begun at Inverary to Bailey. After finishing Bailey's letter, he proceeded to cross it with a poem, the genesis of which he gives by saying that he has destroyed the wretched sonnet written in Burns's cottage, but that "a few days afterwards I wrote some lines cousin-german to the circumstance, which I will transcribe." The poem is *Lines written in the Highlands after a Visit to Burns's Country.*

When were these *Lines* written? Unfortunately, we have really no clue to guide us to any sort of determination on the subject. I am inclined to attribute them to the nice flapped Mahogany table in the nameless inn on account of the line:

"Eagles may seem to sleep wing wide upon the Air,"

which seems to establish a connection with his mention of eagles to Tom in the letter written on that same table. This is the first time that he speaks of eagles, and the passage reads as though it were the first time that he had seen any. But, on the other hand, the scenery of the poem is clearly not that of the country he was then traversing. The first line:

"There is a charm in footing slow across a silent plain,"

does not refer to any spot gone over in the days immediately preceding his sojourn in the inn of the flapped table. Exactly what place, or type of place, the poem describes, I leave for those familiar with the ground to ferret out. For me, who have never been in that part of the Scotch Highlands, such ferreting is impossible. It is but fair to say, however, that a poet has no need to be in the place that he is describing. I have already pointed out, in the chapter on *Endymion*,[1] that reminiscence is a potent

[1] See Vol. I, p. 388.

factor in creative art. That Keats was far from any "silent plain," is rather more a reason for his writing of one than not.

The first part of the poem is excellent description; just this and no more. Nowhere throughout it do we find the slightest hint of Keats's usual charm when dealing with nature, not once is there a single flash of his genius for evocation. The plod of his feet is echoed in his lines, and we cannot suppress the conviction that the poem was written, not because he could not resist it, but because he wanted to try again to write something about Burns to take the taste of his unsuccessful sonnet out of his mouth. The end is a didactic presentation of the giddiness produced by a contemplation of life's futility in the midst of heroic and rather forbidding scenery. A curious thing about the poem, and perhaps its chief interest, is the fact that it is written in a very old English measure — the septenary, called so because it has seven beats, or fourteen syllables, to a line. In its unbroken form, as here, it is not very common in recent English poetry, although both Wordsworth and Mrs. Browning wrote rhymed septenaries, but when each line is divided into two, the first having four beats and the last three, it becomes the regular ballad stanza; in its broken form, it is also much employed by the writers of hymns. Keats's familiarity with it in the original long line may have come from many sources, but undoubtedly the chief of these, for him, was Chapman's translation of the *Odyssey*. Keats himself does not seem to have been over pleased with these *Lines* for he never again refers to them to any one, at least not in the letters which have come down to us.

To return to the Island of Mull. It was thirty-seven miles across from where the ferry landed the travellers to the tip end of the Ross of Mull, whither they were bound. We have already seen what Keats had to say of the first day, here is what Brown says of all the days:

[1] "I must not think of the wind, and the sun, and the rain, after our journey to the Island of Mull. There's a wild place! Thirty-seven miles of jumping and flinging over great stones along no path at all, up the steep and down the steep, and wading through rivulets up to the knees, and crossing a bog, a mile long, up to the ankles."

To add to all this discomfort, Keats caught a cold which flew to his throat. On they struggled, however, somewhat cheered by the guide's singing of Gaelic songs, and in due time reached the coast directly opposite the Island of Iona. Crossing the narrow strip of water to this island, they paid a visit to the ruins of the great cathedral church still standing there. Keats was greatly impressed by these ruins. I only wish there were space to quote his account of them, sent to Tom, but it is too long. At Iona, the friends bargained for a boat to take them to Staffa and land them afterwards at the head of Loch na Keal, from which place the distance back to the ferry would be reduced by at least one half.

Fingal's Cave in the Island of Staffa was a new sensation, and amply repaid Keats for the abominable tramp across Mull. Neither his fatigue nor his sore throat could dampen his delight. "Suppose now," he says, in an effort to give Tom some idea of the place, "the Giants who rebelled against Jove had taken a whole Mass of black Columns and bound them together like bunches of matches — and then with immense Axes had made a cavern in the body of these columns — of course the roof and floor must be composed of the broken ends of the Columns — such is fingal's Cave except that the Sea has done the work of excavations and is continually dashing there — so that we walk along the sides of the cave on the pillars which are left as if for convenient stairs." So much for the contour of the place; but for the colour, Keats, rare colourist that he was, misses no shade of it. He says: "the colour of the columns is a sort of

[1] Quoted by Buxton Forman. Complete Edition.

black with a lurking gloom of purple therein," which is almost a poem as it stands. His complete impression of the cave he sums up in a sentence: "For solemnity and grandeur it far surpasses the finest Cathedral." Another of his sentences I must give for its vividness, and also, again, its colour: "As we approached in the boat there was such a fine swell of the sea that the pillars appeared rising immediately out of the crystal." His conclusion, however, is that "it is impossible to describe it." Having given up description, he takes to poetry and symbolism, and transcribes the poem known as *Staffa*. In *Staffa*, Lycidas is conjured up as the custodian of this great sea cathedral, consecrated to, and built by, Oceanus. The poem, without being really very memorable, has an undeniable charm, and it has more, for somehow it gives a perfect impression of water dashing against wet stone. It smells of dampness, and rings thunderous with waves. At the end, Keats's fit of creation suddenly deserted him, and the six lines immediately preceding the last two descend into something little better than doggerel.

The Staffa day was bright and sunny, or at least it became so at the very moment when the travellers sighted the island, a welcome contrast to the weather they had been having. Dolphins circled up out of the water, and the sun glinted on the waves. All this was new — not mountain, nor lake, nor heather — new, and Keats reacted accordingly.

With Staffa, the objective of the excursion from Oban was reached, and back the friends came, by foot and ferry, to that town, where they seem to have arrived on the evening of Saturday, July twenty-fifth. Keats's throat was giving him a good deal of trouble, although he only says of it: "I have a slight sore throat and think it best to stay a day or two at Oban." But his fatigue is very evident in this remark to Tom: "I assure you I often long for a seat and a Cup o' tea at Well Walk — especially now that

mountains, castles and Lakes are becoming common to me — yet I would rather summer it out, for on the whole I am happier than when I have time to be glum — perhaps it may cure me."

How many days the "day or two" were in actual fact, is a blank, but by Saturday, August first, the pair were at Fort William, from which place they made the ascent of Ben Nevis on Sunday, the second. Keats's madness in submitting himself to such a strain in his fatigued condition is easily accounted for by realizing that no young fellow of twenty-two likes to admit himself too tired to keep up with his companions. Brown's foolishness in permitting Keats to go, is another thing. But Brown was unaccustomed to considering his own health, which never wanted consideration, and probably, also, he believed Keats's statement that his throat was "in a fair way of getting well," this he told Tom the next day, but such indeed was not the case. Madness and folly, the ascent of Ben Nevis certainly was, but up they went just the same. And what young man of spunk would have held back? For again we must remember that Keats had no idea that his sore throats betokened any illness beyond themselves.

The weather, which had treated them so considerately at Staffa, accorded them no such capricious indulgence during the ascent of Ben Nevis. When our travellers started, at about five o'clock in the morning, with their guide — a gentleman attired, remarks Keats, with his indefatigable instinct for noting everything, "in Tartan and Cap," — the day promised well; then, half-way up, the climbers suddenly walked into a mist, which obstinately clung to them thereafter in varying degrees of denseness. But here Keats shall retail his own experience:

> "I am heartily glad it is done — it is almost like a fly crawling up a wainscoat. Imagine the task of mounting ten Saint Pauls without the convenience of Staircases... after much fag and tug and a rest and a glass of whiskey

> apiece we gained the top of the first rise and saw then a tremendous chap above us, which the guide said was still far from the top. After the first Rise our way lay along a heath valley in which there was a Loch — after about a Mile in this Valley we began upon the next ascent, more formidable by far than the last, and kept mounting with short intervals of rest until we got above all vegitation, among nothing but loose Stones which lasted us to the very top — the Guide said we had three Miles of a stony ascent — we gained the first tolerable level after the valley to the height of what in the Valley we had thought the top and saw still above us another huge crag which still the Guide said was not the top — to that we made with an obstinate fag, and having gained it there came on a Mist, so that from that part to the very top we walked in a Mist."

Snow began to appear here and there. Every now and then, the party stopped, and Keats and Brown tumbled stones into the fissures between the rocks to hear the echoes reverberating up to them "in fine style." If the first part of the climb had seemed difficult, the loose stones of the last part were a thousand times more trying. Keats does full justice to the discomforts of the final pull to the summit in the letter to Tom from which I have been quoting:

> "I have said nothing yet of our getting on among the loose stones large and small sometimes on two, sometimes on three, sometimes on four legs — sometimes two and stick, sometimes three and stick, then four again, then two, then a jump, so that we kept on ringing changes on foot, hand, stick, jump, boggle, stumble, foot, hand, foot (very gingerly), stick again and then again a game at all fours."

Of course, to an experienced Alpine climber, the ascent of Ben Nevis (it is only a little over four thousand feet in height) is mere child's play at going up a mountain. But Keats and Brown, accustomed as they had become to tramping, were the veriest amateurs at mountaineering.

Remember, too, that Keats was suffering from the combined effects of a bad sore throat and indigestion. Remember still farther that he was already a prey to tuberculosis, little as he, or any one else, thought so at the time. If we steadily keep in mind these things, we shall quickly lose all desire to smile at his and Brown's belief that in climbing Ben Nevis they were performing quite a feat; on the contrary, seen in the light of the actual circumstances, the climb becomes tragic, and the whirling mists which encompassed them on their way, the grey wings of a hovering doom.

After a time, the mists thinned and cleared, but still, every now and then, clouds swept over the mountain and obscured the view. To Keats, these swirling wreaths of cloud appeared as

> "large dome curtains which kept sailing about, opening and shutting at intervals here and there and everywhere: so that although we did not see one vast wide extent of prospect all round we saw something perhaps finer — these cloudveils opening with a dissolving motion and showing us the mountainous region beneath as through a loophole — these cloudy loopholes ever varying and discovering fresh prospect east, west, north and south. Then it was misty again, and again it was fair — then puff came a cold breeze of wind and bared a craggy chap we had not seen though in close neighborhood. Every now and then we had overhead blue Sky clear and the sun pretty warm."

Keats attempts to give Tom "an Idea of the prospect from a large Mountain top." After saying that the summit seems to one standing upon it like a "stony plain which of course makes you forget you are on any but low ground," he proceeds to describe what he saw from there excellently, but in the veriest prose. All of a sudden his expression changes, and one of his peculiar spurts of imaginative presentation gushes over him. For here is the epitome of his sensations at the moment, in the last phrase: "but the

most new thing of all is the sudden leap of the eye from the extremity of what appears a plain into so vast a distance."

At the top, the party made a long halt, during which the guide, to whom the ascent of Ben Nevis was an every-day affair, told the incredulous friends that, only a few years before, a Mrs. Cameron, "50 years of age and the fattest woman in all Invernesshire" had managed to get up the mountain. "True she had her servants," says Keats, "but then she had herself."

The idea of the portly Mrs. Cameron being pushed and hauled up the steep track which he and Brown had mounted with such difficulty, amused Keats greatly, and either then and there on the mountain, or the next day when he was writing to Tom, he scribbled down a jocose dialogue supposed to have been held between the mountain and the lady upon her arrival at the top. But Keats was really impressed by the grandeur of the mountain and his glimpses of the view. Surely here was a place which must inspire him! The result, as we should expect, was a sonnet, and by no means a bad one, considering that this was an occasional piece — Keats distinctly tells Tom that the sonnet was written on the top of Ben Nevis. Its marked importance, however, is biographical, for it shows that the speculations on the meaning of life, and of man's supreme ignorance on the subject, those speculations with which we are already so familiar, were still very actively pursuing him. He had reached no solution of the riddle, had not found even a working hypothesis of the kind which commonly goes by the name of religion. His profound doubt and confusion are given in the last lines of the *Ben Nevis* sonnet as follows:

> "Here are the craggy stones beneath my feet, —
> Thus much I know that, a poor witless elf,
> I tread on them, — that all my eye doth meet
> Is mist and crag, not only on this height,
> But in the world of thought and mental might!"

Going down the mountain proved to be even more wracking than climbing up it. "I felt it horribly," Keats tells Tom. "Twas the most vile descent — shook me all to pieces."

After such an exertion, common-sense should have counselled the two young men to take another day or two's rest at Fort William, but common-sense seems to have deserted them at this juncture. With only such refreshment as a night's sleep could give them, they started the next day, Monday, August third. Sometime on that day, they stopped at Letterfinlay (called by Keats "Letter Findlay"), but whether or not they passed the night there it is impossible to tell. All that we know definitely of this lap of the journey is that on Thursday, August sixth, they were at Inverness, having probably got there the day before.

Keats had told Tom in his letter of August third from Letterfinlay, that his sore throat was getting well, but if he had been deceived into thinking so, he had found out his mistake by the time he reached Inverness. So bad had his throat become, in fact, that he went to see a doctor, who told him at once, and succinctly, that he must forego the rest of the trip and get home as quickly as possible. "Mr. Keats," writes Brown to Mr. Dilke senior, "is too unwell for fatigue and privation . . . He caught a violent cold in the Isle of Mull, which, far from leaving him, has become worse, and the physician here thinks him too thin and fevered to proceed on our journey." This decision must have been a sudden one for, on August sixth, Keats wrote to Mrs. Wylie, and in that letter he says nothing of any immediate return, but by August eighth he was already on his way.

Sometime before the separation, Keats and Brown visited the ruins of Beauly Abbey. At that time, these ruins were used as a burial place, and one very badly attended to, it would seem, as the young men were struck by

the presence of a heap of bones and skulls which, probably with the intentional acquiescence of the guide, they took to be those of ancient monks. With this idea in mind, they wrote, either then or afterwards, a joint poem on the subject, in which they conjured up the worthy owners of the skulls in quite an amusing fashion, and in one of Burns's favourite stanza forms. So little of this joint production was done by Keats, however, that we need only refer to it in passing.[1]

In the original plan of the trip, Inverness was to be the turning point of it. Having come up by the West coast, the pedestrians had intended to return Southward by an entirely different route, which would take them through Edinburgh and eventually land Keats in Cumberland, where he intended to stay for a few days with Bailey, just settled in a curacy near Carlisle. We may surmise that, at the bottom of his heart, Keats was not sorry to be ordered home by the quickest and most convenient means. How game he was, how anxious to "carry on" until the last moment, can be seen by the Beauly excursion. After all, what had already been accomplished was prodigious. Keats tells Mrs. Wylie that "Besides riding about 400, we have walked above 600 Miles." He is evidently counting from his start from London, but Brown says explicitly to Mr. Dilke; "I have already stumped away on my ten toes 642 miles."

There was nowhere that a direct coach to London could be reached short of Glasgow or Edinburgh; even of what Cary[2] calls "provincial coaches," there were none as far North as Inverness. Horse-back or cart were the only means of locomotion to be had, and neither could be thought of for Keats, who must avoid any extra fatigue.

[1] The poem is printed in full in Sir Sidney Colvin's *Life of John Keats*. Third Edition. Appendix II.

[2] Cary's *New Itinerary of the Great Roads throughout England and Wales, with many of the Principal Roads of Scotland*. 1819.

The alternative was to go by sea, and this Keats decided to do. A Cromarty smack, calling at Inverness on her way to London, offered him his opportunity, and on Saturday, August eighth, Keats bade good-bye to Brown, who was left behind to continue the tour as per schedule, and went on board. The trip was over, and its principal benefits to Keats had been to provide him with a bridge between the old order and the new, to give him *Meg Merrilies*, and fill him with impressions to be conjured up later for use in *Hyperion*.

So, sailing down the coast, we may leave him, and look for a little while at events in Hampstead which preceded his return.

CHAPTER IX

SORROW AND READJUSTMENT

At first, after the departure of his brothers, things seemed to go well with Tom. That he was extremely homesick, there can be no doubt. On the very day that the travellers started, Tom was minded to fulfil a commission with which John had entrusted him. This was to write to Taylor and ask him to give a copy of *Endymion* to Severn, who would call for it. Everyone knows that the first acts of a person left behind by someone who is going on a journey, someone whose going leaves an inevitable blank, are those which connect him with the departed. For Tom to sit down at once and write John's request to Taylor, is a proof of the extent of his homesickness. Another proof lies in the fact that on certain of John's letters to Tom from Scotland, Tom indorsed the date when the letter was received and the date on which it was answered. He probably did this on all the letters, but in many instances the indorsement has not come down to us. In those cases where it has, however, Tom answered the letter on the day that he received it. The day before he left for Scotland, Keats had written to Taylor, and, among other things, had asked a loan of books for Tom. How eagerly Tom longed for the books, and yet how much he feared that John's request for them had smacked of the importunate, can be seen by this wistful little postscript to his letter to Taylor:

> [1] "On consideration it strikes me that you will not be able to let me have books to read — your stock being as I should think mostly new and modern books."

But Taylor was a thoroughly good fellow, and he had Woodhouse at his elbow to egg him on. On Tuesday eve-

[1] From the original unpublished letter. Author's Collection.

ning, June thirtieth, Tom wrote again[1] thanking him for "the parcel of books," and saying that he likes "'Eustace's Tour' very much, and should be glad of the other books you have mentioned." On this day, he had just received John's first letter, and had sent it off on a round of inspection beginning with Reynolds. That Keats's friends did their best for the lonely Tom, we know; Haslam seems to have been particularly kind, and Wells, although his attentions took a mischievous and even cruel turn, was, very likely, merely trying to amuse his sick friend. I shall tell the story of his grievous "joke" presently. Sometime during the Summer, Tom Keats wrote the following note to Dilke. Since we have so little knowledge of the Hampstead side of the Summer, and since the note pictures Tom's condition so sharply — his alternate good and bad days, his constant intention toward cheerfulness — it should, I think, be given here.

[2] "MY DEAR DILKE.

I am really concerned that you should be so ill as Mrs. Bentley reports this morning. Could you and Mrs. Dilke come out again, you would be sure to find me out of bed — sick people are supposed to have delicate stomachs, for my part I should like a slice of underdone surloin. I have sent you a trifle of fruit — the cherries are not so fine as I could wish. I hear London is full of the bowel complaint — has it not reached Hampstead?

Yours truly,
THOS. KEATS."

The letter is dated merely "Tuesday morning," so we have only the cherries to guide us as to the month, but by their evidence I think we may suppose the note to belong either to the very end of June or to the early part of July. From the tone of it, it seems as though John had been gone

[1] Unpublished letter. Author's Collection.

[2] Original unpublished letter in the possession of the Keats Memorial Association. Hampstead, England.



TOM KEATS

From an engraving of a water-colour sketch by Joseph Severn, in the possession of Miss Fanny Speed MacDonald, great grand-daughter of George Keats

some time. The reference to the sirloin is a terrible reminder of the debilitating diet which medical ignorance prescribed for tuberculous patients at that period, so adding the tortures of hunger to all the other sufferings they had to bear. We shall have occasion to notice this again when we come to Keats's days in Rome. Illness breathes in every word of Tom's letter, but plucky illness, illness possessed of a fighting spirit which will give way inch by inch as it must, but will yield no inch without a struggle.

Early in August, Tom became much worse, so much worse that the doctor urged Dilke to send for John. Writing to her father-in-law on Sunday, August sixteenth, Mrs. Dilke tells the story:

> [1] "John Keats's brother is extremely ill, and the doctor begged that his brother might be sent for. Dilke accordingly wrote to him, which was a very unpleasant task. However, from the journal received from Brown last Friday, he says Keats has been so long ill with his sore throat, that he is obliged to give up. I am rather glad of it, as he will not receive the letter, which might have frightened him very much, as he is extremely fond of his brother. How poor Brown will get on alone I know not, as he loses a cheerful, good-tempered, clever companion."

So the clouds hung heavy over Keats's destiny, and bided their time while the Cromarty smack pursued her leisurely way down the coast. But this was not all, mutterings of another storm were in the air, and the inevitable bursting of it was anxiously awaited by the forewarned Taylor and his confidants, Hessey and Woodhouse. The warning had come to Taylor as follows: So early as May, Taylor had taken the precaution, wise or unwise, of calling upon Gifford, the editor of the *Quarterly*,[2] to plead for fair play for the newly published *Endymion*, to beg that the book, simply because its author happened to be a friend of Leigh

[1] *Papers of a Critic*, by Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke.
[2] Colvin. From information supplied by a great-niece of Taylor's.

Hunt's, should not be treated in a spirit of political rancour, but simply as a poem, a work of imagination, with no political bias at all. Early as he was in taking this step, Taylor was too late, for on Gifford's table lay a review of the book. Gifford was polite and non-committal, but Taylor carried away from the interview small hope that the review, which was not shown him, would be lenient. Whether Taylor communicated his fears to any of Keats's more immediate friends, such as Reynolds, whom Taylor constantly saw, we do not know. It is certain, however, that whether they knew of this particular instance or not, the situation could have been, and probably was, correctly postulated by all. In the case of one, we have his own word for it, and for the blunder his fear of the consequences to Keats led him into. The story of Bailey's meeting with Lockhart at Bishop Gleig's house in Scotland has often been told, but the letter to Taylor[1] in which he recounts it has never been printed before. The letter was written at Carlisle, and dated "August 29, 1818."

This is what Bailey says:

> "I have something to tell you respecting Endymion: but it must be *in your ear:* That is, I do not wish it to be repeated to Keats, it being my determination to do him all the good I can without creating mischief. I fear Endymion will be dreadfully cut up in the Edinburgh Magazine (Blackwood's). I met a man in Scotland who is concerned in that publication, & who abused poor Keats in a way that, although it was at the Bishop's table, I could hardly keep my tongue. I said that I supposed he would be attacked in Blackwood's. He replied 'not by *me*'; which would convey the insinuation he would be by someone *else*. The objections, he stated, were frivolous in the extreme. They chiefly respected the *rhymes*. But I feel convinced *now* the Poem will not sell; & I *fear* his future writings will not. In Scotland he is very much despised from what I could collect."

[1] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.

What had really happened, I take from another manuscript in the Woodhouse Book, Morgan Library. Bailey, with the best intentions, undertook to tell Lockhart a few facts of Keats's life, among others that he was "of a respectable family; & though he & his brothers & sister were orphans, they were left with a small but independent Patrimony. He had been brought up to the profession of medicine which he had abandoned for the pursuit of Literature." He was also careful to assure Lockhart that Hunt had had no hand in *Endymion*. What this innocuous information brought forth, the malicious twist by which it was made to argue in Keats's disfavour, utterly confounded Bailey when he read the review, and no wonder.

While all this awaited Keats, he was having a not unpleasant rest in the smack, eating hugely of beef (Scotch porridge, consumed with horn spoons, he could not stomach) and chatting with the other passengers, amused to find himself the only Englishman. This was, so far as is known, his first experience of a ship and of the open sea, and the latter must have impressed him as the perfect complement to the mountains he had been seeing, but we have only a few words from him about the voyage. Events at Hampstead, when he reached it, were such as to throw his experiences during his trip into the background.

On Monday, August seventeenth, the Cromarty smack docked at the London Docks, and Keats set out at once for Hampstead. Mrs. Dilke, who saw him immediately upon his arrival, describes his appearance thus:

> [1] "John Keats arrived here last night, as brown and as shabby as you can imagine; scarcely any shoes left, his jacket all torn at the back, a fur cap, a great plaid, and his knapsack. I cannot tell what he look'd like."

Mrs. Dilke's letter is dated on the nineteenth, and Keats,

[1] *Papers of a Critic*, by Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke.

writing to his sister in a letter which he dates "August 18th," says: "We had a nine days passage and were landed at London Bridge yesterday." There would seem to be some mistake here, and, with Keats's usual vagueness as to the day of the month in mind, I think it quite probable that the fault is his. This difference of dates does, however, leave the exact day of Keats's docking hung in a balance, and I have preferred to let his date stand.

Things were very black for Keats on his return to Hampstead. The sea voyage had done him good, but his throat was still badly inflamed, and in this state he was settling down to nurse the dying Tom; for by that time all hope of Tom's ultimate recovery had been abandoned, it was merely a question of time. John's first duty was to write and apprise Fanny of the change in Tom. This letter, and others written during the Autumn, are tragic with implication. John is always going to ask Abbey to let Fanny come and see Tom, and Abbey's reluctance to permit this is taken for granted. Abbey's attitude was barbarous and unfeeling in the extreme, for we cannot suppose that any hygienic consideration entered into his calculations. He had simply made up his mind that the brothers were a wild couple, and should be kept as much away from their sister as possible. Gross prejudice dictated his opinion, of course; but, as Keats's circle of acquaintances and Abbey's had no single point of contact, there was no one who could enlighten him.

It was unfortunate for Keats that, before he had been a fortnight at Hampstead, Reynolds went off to stay either with, or near, the Drew family in Devonshire. For Keats needed his friends just then, or rather a few days later, when, with the appearance of the August number of *Blackwood's* containing the fourth article on *The Cockney School of Poetry*, the delaying storm of Scotch criticism and vituperation burst upon him in full fury. This fourth paper was devoted entirely to Keats, and to make this

quite clear at the outset, the original motto of the series[1] was truncated to its last three lines, beginning "—— of Keats," etc.

Although the story of the *Blackwood* and *Quarterly* articles has so often been told, I must, perforce, re-tell it here, but I will do so as briefly as possible.

In order to understand the situation, we must realize that, in Keats's day, the great reviews were really *organs* of a party. In our time, it is chiefly the daily papers and the weekly publications which parade a special political bias, but even these never dream of carrying party feeling into the matter of book reviews. It is safe to say that, in this country, at least, an author's political opinions are no bar to his receiving a fair consideration in any paper whatever, except, of course, when his work is a purely political one. Prejudice exists, naturally, but it is a prejudice of individual critics, and since even critics are human and possessed of personal frailties, it could not be otherwise. But the frailest and most irascible of reviewers is free of the charge of measuring his praise or blame according to his author's party leanings. It was quite otherwise in the England of George the third, and remained so for a long time afterwards. Curiously enough, the most important reviews were in the hands of Scotchmen, although one of them was published in London. These were the *Edinburgh Review* of which Constable was the proprietor and Francis Jeffrey the editor; and the *Quarterly*, owned by John Murray and published in London, the editor being William Gifford. The *Edinburgh* was Whig, the *Quarterly* Tory, and each was what it was to the last ditch. Early in 1817, William Blackwood, an enterprising bookseller in Edinburgh and a Tory, conceived the idea of issuing a new monthly magazine which should be at once a spoke in the wheel of his rival Constable, on the spot, and show a more active fighting spirit than the expatriated *Quarterly*. The

[1] See Vol. I, p. 518.

magazine was launched under the title of the *Edinburgh New Monthly Magazine*, but the editors were incompetent, and after six months Blackwood dismissed them and reorganized the magazine with his own name on the title. For new editors, talent stood ready to his hand in the persons of two very clever and astonishingly unscrupulous young men, John Wilson and John Gibson Lockhart. Wilson was the son of a rich Glasgow merchant, and an Oxford graduate, but things had gone ill with him and he was, when Blackwood sought him out, at odds with fortune, as far as money was concerned. Lockhart came of an old Lanarkshire family; he was only twenty-three, but thought himself one hundred on the strength of an Oxford degree and a stay of some weeks in Weimar where he had met Goethe and made one of his circle. This was a great experience, certainly, and Lockhart should have imbibed much wisdom; but what he seems chiefly to have carried back to his native Scotland was an unblushing arrogance, and a profound scorn for any one who could not read Greek and Latin and was unacquainted with current German literature. Each of these promising youths was possessed of the gift of satire, together with a style pleasantly composed of gall and vitriol, and each was totally lacking in imagination and taste. They were delighted to run riot and did, and by doing so stamped themselves forever as first-class cads in the eyes of all posterity. Even Lockhart, the middle-aged Lockhart, beloved son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott and author of the monumental Life of Scott, can never free himself from the stain of the *Cockney School* articles to any one who has read them. No words can exaggerate their unseemly and disgusting quality; even when laughing at their jejune overstatements, wondering how a great reading nation like the British could have taken these ravings seriously, we cannot escape the loathing such writing engenders. I wish I had space in this book to give all four of the *Cockney School* articles

in an appendix, but that cannot be; yet I strongly counsel my readers to seek them out and read them, for no adequate idea of them can be gained by any paraphrase.

To make matters worse, and show that these cocksure, brilliant, and exceedingly stupid young men were also cowards, that each had what the slang of to-day calls a "yellow streak," they signed the articles "Z" and refused to give their names when challenged to do so by Leigh Hunt in the pages of the *Examiner*. The whole transaction is one of the most lamentable in literary history. According to Dilke, Lockhart sincerely repented later, but not until much later; for the sorriest part of the business was the carrying on of the vulgar quarrel, after Keats's death, in a review of Shelley's *Adonais*. What can we think of men who, under the circumstances, could write and print the following?

> "The present story is thus: A *Mr. John Keats*, a young man who had left a decent calling for the melancholy trade of Cockney-poetry, has lately died of a consumption, after having written two or three little books of verses, much neglected by the public. His vanity was probably wrung not less than his purse; for he had it upon the authority of the Cockney Homers and Virgils, that he might become a light to their region at a future time. But all this is not necessary to help a consumption to the death of a poor sedentary man, with an unhealthy aspect, and a mind harassed by the first troubles of versemaking. The New School, however, will have it that he was slaughtered by a criticism of the Quarterly Review. — 'O flesh, how art thou fishified!' — . . . We are not now to defend a publication so well able to defend itself. But the fact is, that the Quarterly finding before it a work at once silly and presumptuous, full of the servile *slang* that Cockaigne dictates to its servitors, and the vulgar indecorums which that Grub Street Empire rejoiceth to applaud, told the truth of the volume, and recommended a change of manners and masters to the scribbler. Keats wrote on; but he wrote

indecently, probably in the indulgence of his social propensities."

And this of a dead man!

The article ends, after treating Shelley's poem as only they could treat it, with a parody of *Adonais* entitled *Elegy on my Tom Cat*, which begins:

"Weep for my Tomcat! all ye Tabbies weep,
For he is gone at last! Not dead alone,
In flowery beauty sleepeth he no sleep;
Like that bewitching youth Endymion!"

Youth is no excuse for such a thing as this. The men who could write and conceive it were ruffians at heart without a spark of decent feeling. But this was long after. I have quoted the passage here because in no other so fully — no, not even in the vile and shameless remarks on Leigh Hunt in the first three papers of the Cockney series — do Wilson and Lockhart reveal what they really were.

The chief reason for the Wilson-Lockhart dislike of Keats was that he was known to be a friend of Hunt's. Hunt was detested for several reasons. Possibly his slighting treatment of Scott in his satire on contemporary writers, *The Feast of the Poets*, had something to do with it, for Scott was idolized by both men; but, without that, the political attitude of the *Examiner* and Hunt's lack of repentance for his plain speaking about the Prince of Wales,[1] even after being jailed on account of it, were enough to incur their hatred. Hunt was to be smashed at all costs; and Keats, as his friend, was to be cleverly chipped, if nothing more.

The chipping process began almost at the opening of the review, where the reader was informed that

"The Phrenzy of the 'Poems' was bad enough in its way; but it did not alarm us half so seriously as the calm, settled, imperturbable drivelling idiocy of 'Endymion.'"

[1] See Vol. I, p. 65.

That started things with a good slap, and "Z" proceeded, quite innocently and merrily, to give himself away, for, after a sneering comment or two on the *Poems*, he remarks of *Endymion:*

> "The old story of the moon falling in love with a shepherd, so prettily told by a Roman Classic, and so exquisitely enlarged and adorned by one of the most elegant of German poets, has been seized upon by Mr. John Keats, to be done with as might seem good unto the sickly fancy of one who never read a single line either of Ovid or of Wieland."

O Lockhart! Lockhart! Aged twenty-three! With what a proud and strutting air you deployed your erudition! And notice that none of the English poets who treated of the tale are called upon. Indeed, no! Lockhart was at the stage when the exotic is of inestimable worth. Latin, the Gentleman's tongue — Wieland, German literature, the latest craze of travelled youth — closed books both to the middle classes. Keats had read Ovid, even in the original, but Lockhart chose to believe otherwise. Mr. twenty-three-years-old, travelled-into-Germany-and-back John Gibson Lockhart, and blustering, devil-take-the-hindmost coadjutor Wilson, sized the book up at once:

> "His Endymion is not a Greek shepherd, loved by a Grecian goddess; he is merely a young Cockney rhymester, dreaming a phantastic dream at the full of the moon."

This was malice, but "Z" was intelligently enough versed in the Greek classics to make one true observation. "As for Mr. Keats' 'Endymion,'" he says, "it has just as much to do with Greece as it has with 'old Tartary the fierce.'" "Z" meant this as animadversion, but we can see it in quite a different light. I have already dealt with this question in the chapter on *Endymion.*[1]

[1] See Vol. I, p. 346.

There is much quotation in the article, and much ridicule is showered on the poem; but the most objectionable parts of it are the personal reflections, for instance:

> "Mr. Hunt is a small poet, but he is a clever man. Mr. Keats is a still smaller poet, and he is only a boy of pretty abilities, which he has done everything in his power to spoil."

In one place, Keats is addressed as "good Johnny Keats," a nomenclature which brought from George, long after,[1] the indignant observation: "John . . . was as much like the *holy Ghost* as *Johnny Keats*." But the crowning exploit of the review was the last paragraph:

> "And now, good-morrow to 'the Muses' son of Promise' . . . We venture to make one small prophecy, that his bookseller will not a second time venture £50 upon anything he can write. It is a better and a wiser thing to be a starved apothecary than a starved poet; so back to the shop Mr. John, back to 'plasters, pills, and ointment boxes,' &c. But, for Heaven's sake, young Sangrado, be a little more sparing of extenuatives and soporifics in your practice than you have been with your poetry."

The wanton cruelty of that passage is extraordinary. All three of the principals, Blackwood, Lockhart, and Wilson, were out for notoriety; the new monthly must make itself noticed by fair means or foul, and this sort of thing produced attention. Yet there were protests. Blackwood's London agents objected to the "Z" articles, and the publisher had to lie himself into their good graces again. Murray, who had taken an interest in the magazine, withdrew his money. Yet still the trio kept on. Even the tragic death of John Scott in a duel with Christie (a duel which was the outgrowth of Scott's reiterated protests against the scurrilities of *Maga*), early in 1821, had little effect.

[1] Letter from George Keats to Dilke. April 29, 1825. Author's Collection.

The *Adonais* review, the most abominable of all, appeared in the number for December, 1821. As to the question of the authorship of the "Z" articles, beyond the fact that they were probably written by one young man and touched up by the other, and that each in turn played critic to the other's composition, we cannot go. But this fourth *Cockney School* paper contains such obvious traces of Lockhart's hand that he certainly must have had a chief part in it. Sir Sidney Colvin has pointed out that both the word "Sangrado," taken from Le Sage's *Gil Blas*, and the allusion to Wieland's *Endymion* point clearly to him, particularly the latter, since although Wieland's *Oberon* was known to English readers through Sotheby's translation, no one connected with *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* is at all likely to have known anything of his untranslated minor works except Lockhart, whose sojourn at Weimar had at least familiarized him with contemporary German poetry.

Late in September, the April number of the *Quarterly* appeared, and in it was the paper which Taylor had seen lying on Gifford's table four months earlier. Gifford, whom Sir Sidney Colvin aptly calls "the acrid and deformed pedant Gifford," was an implacable partizan, conservative and narrow in his outlook on literature, entirely given over to the good old way in everything. The man to whom he had consigned *Endymion* for review, is now known to have been John Wilson Croker, as hide-bound a formalist as himself. No man less capable of understanding the fresh luxuriance of *Endymion* could have been found. The result was as might have been expected. The *Quarterly* article (unsigned, by the way; these prudent champions of the good old way preferred to let off their blunderbusses behind the safe screen of anonymity) began with a frank admission that the author of it had been unable to read beyond the First Book of *Endymion*, of which he could make neither head nor tail. The second paragraph ingratiatingly continued:

> "It is not that Mr. Keats, (if that be his real name, for we almost doubt that any man in his senses would put his real name to such a rhapsody,) it is not, we say, that the author has not powers of language, rays of fancy, and gleams of genius — he has all these; but he is unhappily a disciple of the new school of what has been somewhere called Cockney poetry; which may be defined to consist of the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language."

So the door was opened a crack and the skeleton peeped through. The Tory feared the Whig. The great Tory publishing house of Murray feared the slightest spark of Whigism so much that through its mouthpiece, the long-established Tory organ, the *Quarterly*, it could stoop to crush a young poet's honest work, and in so doing inconvenience the small but tenacious firm of Taylor and Hessey. Taking Keats's Preface, Croker turned Keats's pathetic humility into a petard for his own hoisting. The poet himself acknowledged the book to be immature; he was young and hoped to do better — his own words convicted him! Croker was merciless. His literary gods were assailed. "There is hardly a complete couplet enclosing a complete idea in the whole book," the scandalized pedant roared. This was intolerable, and he proceeded to quote and quote again; to string up rhymes of which he did not approve, for ridicule; to point out lines whose scansion eluded his metronomic ear; to list Keats's verbal inventions and make fun of them; in short, to prove, with the infinite cunning of unrelated lines, phrases, and words, that the poem was an utterly foolish and contemptible bit of childish effrontery. Not once was he honest enough to give a single example of the merits he had admitted: powers of language, rays of fancy, gleams of genius. These were left with their bare mention. The paper ended as it began, with a sneer:

> "If any one should be bold enough to purchase this 'Poetic Romance,' and so much more patient, than our-

selves, as to get beyond the first book, and so much more fortunate as to find a meaning, we entreat him to make us acquainted with his success; we shall then return to the task which we now abandon in despair, and endeavour to make all due amends to Mr. Keats and to our readers."

It will at once be seen that the *Quarterly*, while not descending to the unpardonable personalities which disgraced *Blackwood's*, had in reality published the more dangerous article. The excesses of *Blackwood's*, the tone of the whole review, these things could not help but carry their own antidotes with them. Evident malice can — nay, must — be, in a measure, discounted. Irony, on the other hand, has no button on its foil. And the *Quarterly* had put its finger on a real weakness. Keats's versification was not always beyond reproach, his coinings were not always felicitous and there were too many of them. The *Quarterly* could not be entirely disagreed with, all that could be said was that there was another side which Croker would not — indeed, I think, could not — see.

A third review, in some ways the worst of the three, had come out in the June number of the *British Critic*, but, considering the dilatory appearance of periodicals in those days, Keats probably did not see it until his return from Scotland. Of this publication, its conductors and point of view, that compendium of useful knowledge, Leigh's *New Picture of London*, 1819, says: "This work is conducted by persons of the established church, and on the orthodox principles of that respectable body." The author of the review of *Endymion* is unknown, of his quality we can guess by a couple of quotations. His charming method of dealing with the poem is to tell the story, interpolating in his text various expressions taken from Keats which he dislikes, thus making the whole read as nonsensically as possible; and to this form of ridicule he adds such judicious comments as his natural refinement suggests. Here is an illustration, the parentheses are his:

> "it seems that one evening when the sun had done driving 'his snorting four,' 'there blossom'd suddenly a magic bed of sacred ditamy,' (Qu. dimity?) and he looked up to the 'lidless-eyed train of planets,' where he saw 'a completed form of all completeness,' 'with gordian'd locks and pearl round ears,' and kissed all these till he fell into a 'stupid sleep,' from which he was roused by 'a gentle creep,' (N.B. Mr. Tiffin is the ablest bug-destroyer of our days,) to look at some 'upturn'd gills of dying fish.'"

This exquisite humour is carried on throughout, the last paragraph reading:

> "We do most solemnly assure our readers that this poem, containing 4074 lines, is printed on very nice hot-pressed paper, and sold for nine shillings, by a very respectable London bookseller. Moreover, that the author has put his name in the title page, and told us, that though he is something between man and boy, he means by and by to be 'plotting and fitting himself for verses fit to live.' We think it necessary to add that it is all written in rhyme, and, for the most part, (when there are syllables enough) in the heroic couplet."

Two of the most important reviews had spoken, the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood's*. The *British Critic* had not quite the same rank, it was merely the terrier yapping beside the big dogs. But where was the Whig rival, Constable's *Edinburgh Review*, whose editor was the temperate and intellectual Jeffrey? Silent, totally silent. No notice whatever was taken of *Endymion* in the *Edinburgh Review* until two years later.

Seldom has any author been called upon to face a more annihilating trio of reviews than these that Keats read, one after the other, during the first weeks of his return to Hampstead. To say that he was not cut to the quick by them, would be both foolish and false; but to believe that he was in the least crushed because of them is to misunderstand his character and misconstrue his attitude. He

winced, but never for a moment did he flinch. No man likes to be called a "starved apothecary," or "an amiable but infatuated bardling," but that Keats ever wavered under these sneers has been long since proved not to have been so. There is perfect sense in his remark that "what Reviewers can put a hindrance to must be — a nothing — or mediocre which is worse." He tells George that such articles are "a mere matter of the moment," and adds that the attempt to crush him in the *Quarterly* has only brought him into more notice.

Such flaming attacks were almost sure to bring rejoinders. On Saturday, October third, a letter appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*. This letter averred that its author knew nothing of Keats, but was moved by the "malice and gross injustice" displayed by the *Quarterly* toward him to put in a word of protest. Led to read the poem by the article in question, the writer, having done so, announces that he dares, "appeal to the taste and judgement of your readers, that beauties of the highest order may be found in almost every page." After a few perfectly just criticisms, which do but make his encomiums the more weighty, the writer ends with some very sharp digs at certain well-known critics (suggested, but not named) who might have written the review, among others, funnily enough, Croker himself, to whom he advises a comparison between *Endymion* and the *Battle of Talevera*. Since Croker was the author of the *Battle*, this was a bit of sheer, heart-winning audacity, and endears the mythical "J. S." to us forever. The article was signed "J. S." but who wrote it remains a mystery. Both Keats and Taylor declared they did not know. It could not have been Severn, he was dangerously ill with a "typhous fever" (probably typhoid) at the time; John Scott has been suggested as the author, but he was still abroad; James Smith is a possible speculation, but has nothing to substantiate it. No, we do not know the author — as yet, at least.

On the following Thursday, the *Morning Chronicle* published another letter, this time signed "R. B." and dated "Temple." "R. B." was also declared unknown by both Keats and Taylor, and no hint as to who he was has ever been discovered. I have found in the Woodhouse Book in the Morgan Library a copy of this letter, but I fear that proves nothing, for Woodhouse may simply have copied it from the paper. It is worth remarking, however, that he does not seem to have copied the letter signed "J. S." "R. B.'s" letter was a manly backing up of "J. S.," who had anticipated the "few remarks" which he (R. B.) had intended to make. To prove his point that "the Critic who could pass over such beauties as these lines contain" is not "very implicitly to be relied upon," "R. B." appends to his article some long quotations from *Endymion*, all taken from the First Book, as the *Quarterly* reviewer had professed to have read nothing else. These quotations amount in all to about fifty lines, twenty-two of which are taken from the *Hymn to Pan.*

When the last letter came out, good, thoughtful, sympathetic Hessey sent them both to Keats. Keats, in his answer, shows exactly how the whole circumstance was affecting him:

> "I cannot but feel indebted to those gentlemen who have taken my part. As for the rest, I begin to get a little acquainted with my own strength and weakness. — Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critique on his own Works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what Blackwood or the Quarterly could possibly inflict — and also when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary reperception and ratification of what is fine. J. S. is perfectly right in regard to the slip-shod Endymion. That it is so is no fault of mine. No! — though it may sound a little paradoxical. It is as good as I had power to make it — by myself. Had I been

nervous about its being a perfect piece, and with that view asked advice, and trembled over every page, it would not have been written; for it is not in my nature to fumble — I will write independently. — I have written independently *without Judgement.* I may write independently, and *with Judgement* hereafter. The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man: It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness in itself. That which is creative must create itself. In 'Endymion,' I leaped headlong into the sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the Soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea and comfortable advice. I was never afraid of failure; for I would sooner fail than not be among the greatest."

So Keats looked into and judged himself, and who shall say that the judgment was not wise and just!

Keats's friends were, of course, if not surprised at these vicious attacks, nevertheless utterly incensed. Bailey was introduced to Blackwood somewhere, and on Blackwood's informing him that, on his return from London, he had been very sorry to find the attack on Keats in his magazine, Bailey flatly told him that it was "infamous." But Bailey was not content to stop there. He tried to get Blackwood to let him publish a defence of Keats, but naturally could not do so. Then he wrote an article attacking *Blackwood's* and sent it to Constable for insertion in his *Edinburgh Magazine* (not to be confounded with the *Edinburgh Review*), but this was returned to him without a word. Bailey, by this time discouraged, tore up his article, but begged Taylor to tell Keats what his intentions had been.

Reynolds, in Devonshire, had better luck. He wrote a long paper, attacking the *Quarterly* and lauding Keats, and got it published in *The Alfred, West of England Journal and General Advertiser* on Tuesday, October sixth. This article, somewhat abridged, Hunt reprinted the following Sunday in the *Examiner*, with a few prefatory remarks by

himself. Hunt has been accused of pusillanimity in not coming to Keats's rescue more stoutly at this time, and after Keats's death he himself regretted that he had not done more. But what good would it have been? Hunt could only have made things worse, and then, too, he was not enthusiastic over *Endymion*, and more than a little piqued that he had not been consulted about it. On the whole, I imagine that the wisest thing he could do was just what he did — reprint Reynolds's article and leave things there. Since the article was not signed, it had all the weight of a fresh opinion hailing from another part of the country.

Nothing can exaggerate the cruelty of the reviews, nor the unfortunate chance that Keats should have had to undergo them just when he did. Tom's illness was misery sufficient to darken all Keats's sky. Besides this, he was suffering from a mental tumult of opposing desires. It is not a little difficult to give a correct picture of Keats's mind during this Autumn. We must follow no thread of his thought without at the same time keeping an eye on the other threads. Keats lived his days as they came, fighting his difficulties as they arose, now absorbed in his own state of mind, then suddenly lifted out of himself by reflecting for a time on poetry, and again fuming at the reviews and planning "great verse" which should, in no very distant future, confute his enemies; yet, all the time, over him, surrounding him whichever way he turned, pressing down upon him, was the inescapable knowledge that Tom was dying, dying, leaving him, and that every hour spent away from Tom, every thought which had not its core in Tom, was in some sort a treason, a wasting of precious moments the flight of which he could not stay. With Brown still in Scotland, and Reynolds in Devonshire, Keats's chief props during the early Autumn were undoubtedly the Dilkes. Then Dilke, who had not been well for some time, went off to Brighton, and Haydon,

whose eyes had been troubling him very much, also departed to visit his sister at Bridgewater. The old group seemed quite disintegrated. Keats must often have felt that he was living in some ghastly nightmare, where all the old familiar things of habit had suddenly grown strange and unreal. If the streets looked the same, his purposes as he walked along them were quite altered; the cheery lodging at Well Walk was inconceivably changed. No George, and only a poor, tortured semblance of Tom to greet him when he came back from a walk, or from town — Tom, to whom he could not vent his own sufferings as he had been wont to do all his life. We get a very clear glimpse of his condition in a passage from a letter which he wrote to Dilke late in September. After an heroic attempt to be his old nonsensical self for a page, he breaks out:

> "I wish I could say Tom was any better. His identity presses upon me so all day that I am obliged to go out — and although I intended to have given some time to study alone, I am obliged to write and plunge into abstract images to ease myself of his countenance, his voice, and feebleness — so that I live now in a continual fever. It must be poisonous to life, although I feel well."

That abstract images, either his own or other people's often failed to ease him can be seen by an annotation in his folio Shakespeare, where, in Act III, Scene IV, of King Lear, the words, "poore Tom," are underlined and the date, "Sunday evening, Oct^r^ 4, 1818," written beside them.

In the same letter to Dilke, he casually mentions that

> "Rice is in town. I have not seen him, nor shall I for some time, as my throat has become worse after getting well, and I am determined to stop at home till I am quite well."

On the same day, he wrote to Reynolds, a letter full of generous rejoicing at his friend's happiness. From this letter, and from Keats's telling Dilke that he hears that

Reynolds is "almost over-happy," I suppose that Miss Drew had at last consented to a formal engagement. Here is what Keats says about Reynolds and about himself:

> "Believe me I have rather rejoiced at your happiness than fretted at your silence. Indeed I am grieved on your account that I am not at the same time happy. But I conjure you to think at present of nothing but pleasure — 'Gather the rose, &c' — gorge the honey of life. I pity you as much that it cannot last forever, as I do myself now drinking bitters. Give yourself up to it — you cannot help it — and I have a consolation in thinking so. I never was in love — yet the voice and shape of a Woman has haunted me these two days — at such a time, when the relief, the feverous relief of Poetry seems a much less crime. This morning Poetry has conquered — I have relapsed into those abstractions which are my only life — I feel escaped from a new strange and threatening sorrow — and I am thankful for it. There is an awful warmth about my heart like a load of Immortality.
>
> Poor Tom — that woman — and Poetry were ringing changes in my senses. Now I am in comparison happy — I am sensible this will distress you — you must forgive me."

Already, before he left Scotland, Keats, as we have seen, was considerably occupied with the thought of women; how they stood to him, and if they really stood anywhere at all in his economy. Now, suddenly, the negative turns positive. A woman swings across his vision, and he is conscious of a distinct sense of attraction. This is disconcerting, and in his present situation such a thought appears like sacrilege to him. Also, he is afraid, distinctly afraid, of what a real passion would mean to him. This is not a real passion, he has the perspicacity to realize that immediately. This is to be no more than a passing excitement; but, for the moment, even as he sees behind it, as it were, his nerves respond acutely to its stimulus, so that

the memory of this woman shakes and confuses him by its implication of a possibility.

The woman who passes so kaleidoscopically across Keats's destiny was a young Anglo-Indian, Miss Jane Cox, a niece of Mrs. Reynolds. Keats tells the whole story to George and Georgiana a few days later, when, we may guess, a little more perspective had been added to the original effect:

> "She is not a Cleopatra, but she is at least a Charmian. She has a rich eastern look; she has fine eyes and fine manners. When she comes into a room she makes an impression the same as the Beauty of a Leopardess . . . I always find myself more at ease with such a woman; the picture before me always gives me a life and animation which I cannot possibly feel with anything inferior. I am at such times too much occupied in admiring to be awkward or on a tremble. I forget myself entirely because I live in her. You will by this time think I am in love with her; so before I go any further I will tell you I am not — she kept me awake one Night as a tune of Mozart's might do . . . I believe tho' she has faults — the same as Charmian and Cleopatra might have had. Yet she is a fine thing speaking in a worldly way: for there are two distinct tempers of mind in which we judge of things — the worldly, theatrical and pantomimical; and the unearthly, spiritual and ethereal — in the former Buonaparte, Lord Byron and this Charmian hold the first place in our Minds; in the latter, John Howard, Bishop Hooker rocking his child's cradle, and you my dear Sister are the conquering feelings. As a Man in the world I love the rich talk of a Charmian; as an eternal Being I love the thought of you. I should like her to ruin me, and I should like you to save me."

In spite of her rich talk and leopardess-like bearing, Miss Cox had not the qualities essential to the making of a deep impression upon Keats. The dual love which he unconsciously craved, that longing for a lover who should also be a mother, that necessity for believing in the spirit even

while adoring the flesh, all this girt Keats as with a magically tempered armour. Miss Cox had no weapon to pierce such metal as this, and of her we hear no more. But, even as it listed, the wind of sexual passion was preparing to blow again.

To follow Keats's life as he lived it during these Autumn months, it is constantly necessary to break off one train of thought and pursue another. Tom, Poetry, and Woman — these are the things which shared Keats's life at this time. He knew that health to him meant having poetry to write, and writing it. If his mind must wander from Tom, even for a moment, poetry was the only thing which carried a certain justification with it. There was no infidelity here; Tom loved his poetry as much as he did. And so the changes ring back to Tom.

Luckily for Keats, there were outside things which must be attended to. Why, in this very number of the *Quarterly*, there was a review of Birkbeck's two books on America. If Keats saw it, he must have been struck with the superb irony of circumstance which put it there.

One thing the reviews had done. They had shown Keats how firmly his friends and his publishers were prepared to stand by him. On one occasion, dining with Hessey, Keats seems to have said something to the effect that everything had been written already, and therefore what was the use of writing any more. Woodhouse, who was present, was a good deal worried at Keats's remark, and, taking *Blackwood's* and the *Quarterly* into consideration, he could not wonder at it. So distressed was he, that he sat down and wrote to Keats. This letter has never, so far as I can discover, been printed, although it has been postulated from Keats's answer. A second unpublished document contains Woodhouse's comments on this answer, and as Keats's letter and the two Woodhouse documents together make an interesting and unrecorded series, I shall give extracts from all three.

Writing from his rooms in the Temple, under the date of October twenty-first, Woodhouse says:

[1] "My Dear Keats,

Whilst in the country, from whence I am but lately returned, I met with that malicious, but weak & silly article on Endymion in the last Quarterly Review. God help the Critic, whoever he be! He is as ignorant of the rudiments of his own craft as of the Essentials of true Poetry.

That his *very regrettable*[2] censures may have the effect of scaring from the perusal of the work some of the 'Dandy' readers, male & female, who love to be spared the trouble of judging for themselves, is to be expected. But with men of sense, (as the example of J. S. in the Chronicle, proves) the effect must be the reverse . . . for the reviewer in his undiscriminating stupidity, has laid his finger of contempt upon passages of such beauty, that no one with a spark of poetic feeling can read them without a desire to know more of the poem. — 'If,' said a friend of mine at Bath, who had seen the critique, but not the work, 'these are the worst passages, what must the best be' . . . But enough of such cobbling, carping, decasyllabic, finger-scanning criticaster. — His hour of 'brief authority' must be nigh over. His blindness will soon work its own way into the earth. —

The appearance of this 'critical morsel,' however, determines me to address you on the subject of your late conversation at Hessey's, on which I have often since reflected, and never without a degree of pain — I may have misconceived you; but I understood you to say, you thought there was now nothing original to be written in poetry; that its riches were already exhausted, & all its beauties forestalled — & That you should, consequently, write no more. I cannot assent to your premises, and I most earnestly deprecate your conclusion. — For my part I believe most sincerely, that the wealth of poetry is unexhausted and inexhaustible — The ideas derivable to us from our senses singly & in their various combinations with

[1] From a draft of the original letter made by Woodhouse. Author's Collection.

[2] This word is problematic, as it could not be clearly read.

each other store the mind with endless images of natural beauty . . . It is then for the Poëta factus, the imitator of *others, who sings only as has been sung, to say that our measure of poetry is full, & that there is nothing new to be* written, thus charging upon 'most innocent nature' a dearth existing only in his own dull brain — But the poëta natus, the true born son of Genius, who creates for himself the world in which his own fancy ranges, who culls from it fair forms of truth beauty & purity & apparels them in hues chosen by himself should hold a different language — he need never fear that the treasury he draws from can be exhausted, nor despair of always being able to make an original selection.

It is true that in this age; the mass are not of soul to conceive of themselves or even to apprehend when presented to them, the truly & simply beautiful of poetry. — A taste vitiated by the sweetmeats & kickshaws of the past century may be the reason for this. Still fewer of this generation are capable of properly embodying the high conceptions they may have — and of the last number few are the individuals who do not allow their fire and originality to be damped by the apprehensions of shallow censures from the grouching & the 'cold-hearted.' 'In these evil days however, and these Evil tongues' (in the spirit of truth & sincerity & not of flattery I say it) I believe there has appeared one bard who 'preserves his vessel' in purity independence & honor — who judges of the beautiful for himself, careless who thinks with him — who pursues his own selfappointed & approved course right onward — who stoops not from his flight to win sullied breath from the multitude . . . and shall such a one, upon whom anxious eyes are fixed . . . be dismayed at the yelpings of the tuneless, the curious, the malignant or the undiscerning? or shall he fall into the worse error of supposing that there is left no corner of the universal heaven of poetry unvisited by Wing? Shall he subtract himself from the caputations[1] of his country; and leave its ear & its soul to be soothed only by the rhymers & the coupleteers? Shall he let 'so fair a house fall to decay' — and shall he give the land which let

[1] This seems to be the word Woodhouse wrote, but it is very indistinct.

Chatterton & K. White die of unkindness and neglect — but which yet retained the grace to weep over their ashes, no opportunity of redeeming its Character & paying the vast debt it owes to Genius? — Your conduct, my Dear Keats, must give these Questions an answer. —

'Know thine own work & reverence the lyre!' —

The world, I hope & trust, is not quite so dead dull and ungrateful as you may have apprehended — or as a few malevolent spirits may have given you reason to imagine. It contains, I know, many who have a warm 'affection for the cause of stedfast Genius toiling gallantly,' — many who, tho' personally unknown to you, look with the eye of hope & anticipation to your future course — but very few who in sincere wishes for your welfare, & passion for your fame, exceed, Dear Keats,

Yours most truly,
RICHD WOODHOUSE."

We get a very clear idea of Woodhouse from that letter. The man himself is there, with his keen literary interest, his insight, his loyalty, and his egregious habit of constant quotation. Woodhouse is a bit stilted now and then, very much the lettered dilettante, but such a good, steady, honest soul looks at us through the ornamental phrases that we forget to be annoyed by them, and notice only the evident sincerity which no clap-trap of expression can conceal. Keats was never intimate with Woodhouse in the sense that he was intimate with Reynolds, or Bailey, or Brown, but Woodhouse must have been a comfort to him in many ways, he must often have warmed himself at Woodhouse's enthusiasm, even though Woodhouse's insatiable curiosity in regard to his work undoubtedly galled him at times. But this letter came at the crucial moment, when Keats needed just the kind of encouragement and solid backing that Woodhouse gave. He answered within the week (his reply is postmarked "OC. 27, 1818. 12 o'Clock") in a letter which is so important that, in spite of its being well known, I do not feel justified in giving otherwise than entire.

[1] "MY DEAR WOODHOUSE.

Your letter gave me great satisfaction, more on account of its friendliness than any relish for that matter in it which is accounted so acceptable to the 'genus irritabile.' The best answer I can give you is in a clerklike manner to make some observations on two principal points which seem to point like indices into the midst of the whole pro and con about genius, and views, and atchievements and ambition and cætera. 1st. As to the poetical character itself (I mean that sort, of which, if I am anything, I am a member; that sort distinguished from the Wordsworthian, or egotistical Sublime; which is a thing per se, and stands alone), it is not itself — it has no self — It is every thing and nothing — It has no character — it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated. — It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the chameleon poet. It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things, any more than from its taste for the bright one, because they both end in speculation. A poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence because he has no Identity — he is continually in for and filling some other body. The Sun, — the Moon, — the Sea, and men and women, who are creatures of impulse, are poetical, and have about them an unchangeable attribute; the poet has none, no identity — he is certainly the most unpoetical of all God's creatures. — If then he has no self, and if I am a poet, where is the wonder that I should say that I would write no more? Might I not at that very instant have been cogitating on the Characters of Saturn and Ops? It is a wretched thing to confess; but it is a very fact, that not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical Nature — how can it, when I have no Nature? When I am in a room with people, if I ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then, not myself goes home to myself, but the identity of every one in the room begins to press upon me, so that I am in a very little time annihilated — not only among men; it would be the same in a nursery

[1] Quoted from the original letter. Author's Collection.

of Children. I know not whether I make myself wholly understood: I hope enough so to let you see that no dependence is to be placed on what I said that day.

In the second place, I will speak of my views, and of the life I purpose to myself. I am ambitious of doing the world some good: if I should be spared, that may be the work of maturer years — in the interval I will assay to reach to as high a summit in poetry as the nerve bestowed upon me will suffer. The faint conceptions I have of poems to come bring the blood frequently into my forehead. All I hope is, that I may not lose all interest in human affairs — that the solitary Indifference I feel for applause, even from the finest spirits, will not blunt any acuteness of vision I may have. I do not think it will. I feel assured I should write from the mere yearning and fondness I have for the beautiful, even if my night's labours should be burnt every Morning, and no eye ever shine upon them. But even now I am perhaps not speaking from myself, but from some Character in whose soul I now live.

I am sure, however, that this next sentence is from myself — I feel your anxiety, good opinion, and friendship, in the highest degree, and am

Yours most sincerely,
JOHN KEATS."

There is some exaggeration here, and more than a little fatigue. Keats was bearing too much, and it was telling upon him. The identities of people do not so press upon a person in health, even though he be a poet. That Tom's identity should press upon him constantly at this time, is no wonder; it could not have been otherwise. But that this impinging of other personalities on his should be carried into a drawing-room of casual acquaintance, shows that Keats was all fagged out, with brain, and nerves, and body harassed and jangling. The marvel is that he stood the strain as well as he did. And there is a great deal of truth in his remarks. The poet differs from the "poetic" person in just this power to lose himself in his creations.

The "poetic" person is a sentimentalist, he refers all things to himself and finds them of importance in proportion to the sensations they arouse in him; the poet is concerned with his creations for themselves, and forgets his own personality in the effort to imbue them with such as are proper to his conception of them. We have seen before how puzzled Keats was by his own changes of mood. In referring to them as belonging to some other personality, he is merely seeking to satisfy himself by inventing a reason for them. But the reason does not quite hit the mark, although it glances off the edge of it. We shall be wiser not to follow Keats's argument with too implicit a faith. Of his sincerity in writing it, there can be no question. He had persuaded himself that he had found an explanation, while in reality the clue lay in the complexity of his character alone.

Woodhouse appears to have expended a good deal of thought on the exact meaning of Keats's words, taken in connection with the man as he knew him. Leaving on one side, with admirable perspicuity, the relation of Keats's imaginative life to his expressed intentions, thus refusing any agreement to Keats's chief contention, he nevertheless realized and traced the positive facts which Keats had assayed to explain. The document in which Woodhouse set down his conclusions is without superscription of any sort, so it may have been merely one of his many notes on Keats; on the other hand, it is quite probable that Woodhouse was writing to enlighten Taylor, to whom he very probably showed Keats's letter. Woodhouse's reflections, in part, are:

> [1] "I believe him to be right with regard to his own Poetical Character — And I perceive clearly the distinction he draws between himself & those of the Wordsworth School. There are gradations in Poetry and in Poets."

[1] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.

Here Woodhouse describes at some length the various kinds of poets, and continues:

> "The highest order of Poet will not only possess all the above powers but will have so high an imag^{n} that he will be able to throw his own soul into any object he sees or imagines, so as to see feel be sensible of & express all that the object itself wo^{d} see feel be sensible of or express. He will speak out of that object so that His own self will with the Exception of the mechanical part be 'annihilated.' — and it is of the excess of this power that I suppose Keats to speak, when he says he has no identity. As a poet, and when the fit is upon him, this is true. And it is a fact that he does by the power of his Imag^{n} create ideal personages substances & Powers — that he lives for a time in their souls or Essences or ideas — and that occasionally so intensely as to lose consciousness of what is round him. We all do the same in a degree when we fall into a reverie."

Here an asterisk brings in a footnote, as follows:

> "The power of his Imag^{n} is apparent in Every page of his Endym^{n} — & He has affirmed that he can conceive of a billiard Ball that it may have a sense of delight from its own roundness, smoothness & volubility & the rapidity of its motion."

Then comes a paragraph of recapitulation, after which Woodhouse goes on:

> "This being his idea of the Poetical Character — he may well say that a poet has no identity — as a Man he must have Identity. But as a poet he need not. And in this Sense a poet is 'the most unpoetical of God's creatures.' for his soul has no distinctive characteristic — it cannot be itself made the subj^{t} of Poetry that is another persons soul can not be thrown into the poet's for there is no identity or personal impulse to be acted upon!
>
> Shaksp^{r} was a poet of the kind above ment^{d} — and he was perhaps the only one besides Keats who possessed this power in an extra degree . . .

> L[d] Byron does not come up to this character. He can certainly conceive & describe a dark accomplished vilain in love. & a female tender and true who loves him. Or a sated & palled sensualist misanthrope & Deist. But here his power ends. The true poet can not only conceive this — but can assume any character Essence idea or substance at pleasure. & he has this imaginative faculty not in a limited manner, but in full universality.
>
> Let us pursue Speculation on these Matters: & we shall soon be bro[t] to believe in the truth of every Syllable of Keats's letter, taken as a description of himself and his own ideas and feelgs."

The chief thing worth preserving in this commentary is Keats's observation on the billiard-ball. It is perfectly characteristic and highly important. What the psychologists call "organic reaction" is here present to a superlative degree. "Organic reaction" is the sudden sensation of physical participation in the action of an object seen, or proper to a word pronounced. For instance, the word "wind" will give a person with strong organic reactions a sense of being buffeted and blown upon by a high wind. Keats, in watching the billiard-ball, felt in himself, distinctly and coercingly, the sensations which he imagined that a billiard-ball must have. The word "volubility" is arresting; it is allied to the "intellect" of the water-fall at Ambleside.[1] That Keats's reactions were organic, is obvious to every careful student of his poetry, but here is an evidence of it which we are greatly indebted to Woodhouse for having preserved.

If only a fraction of Woodhouse's letter were taken up with the "tarterly" *Quarterly* (to borrow Byron's expression), and Keats in his answer ignored the subject entirely, it was, nevertheless, very much present in the minds of all the set. What was to be done? Clearly the best response to such malice was to publish again and at

[1] See Vol. II, p. 23.

once. It had been immediately after the chilly reception of the *Poems* that Keats had begun *Endymion*. But for use at once, what was there? Nothing, really, but the *Pot of Basil* and a few sonnets and short lyrics. The *Pot of Basil* was not only done, but copied out fair. In his letter of the twenty-first of September to Reynolds, then in Devonshire, Keats had said: "Had I known you would have set out so soon I could have sent you the 'Pot of Basil' for I had copied it out ready." Reynolds returned to town early in October, but it was not so easy for him and Keats to meet as it had been hitherto. Reynolds, as articled clerk to a solicitor, was pretty well tied down, and Keats could only leave Tom very occasionally, probably just when some friend was on hand to spell him. By hook or by crook, however, Reynolds managed to get out to Well Walk, and brought back with him the *Pot of Basil*. This was on Thursday, October thirteenth, and the next morning, in the fullness of his heart over the poem, he wrote a long letter to Keats. It is not difficult to see why Keats was so fond of Reynolds after reading this letter.

[1] "My dear Keats.

I was most delighted at seeing you yesterday, — for I hardly knew how I was to meet with you, situated as you are, and confined as I am. I wish I could have stayed longer with you. As to the Poem I am of all things anxious that you should publish it, for its completeness will be a full answer to all the ignorant malevolence of cold lying Scotchmen and stupid Englishmen. The overweening struggle to *oppress* you only shows the world that so much of Endeavour cannot be directed to Nothing. Men do not set their muscles, and strain their sinews to break a straw. I am confident, Keats, that the Pot of Basil hath that simplicity and quiet pathos, which are of sure sovereignty over all hearts. I must say that it would delight me to have you prove yourself to the world, what we know you

[1] Given, slightly abridged, from a transcription of the original letter made by Professor Edward S. Burgess of New York University.

to be; — to have you annul the Quarterly Review, by the best of all answers.

When I see you, I will give you the Poem . . . And let us have the Tale put forth, now that an interest is aroused. One or two of your Sonnets you might print, I am sure . . . You will remember that we were [to] pu[t out][1] together. I give over all intention and you ought to be alone. I can never write anything now — my mind is taken the other way; — But I shall set my heart on having you, high, as you ought to be. Do *you* get Fame, — and I shall have it in being your affectionate and steady friend . . .

Your ever affectionate

J. H. REYNOLDS."

Keats wanted to write, longed to write, but how could he, with Tom in the state that he was, and his own mind torn by so many conflicting importunities? He seems to have made an effort to begin *Hyperion*; we see from the reference to Saturn and Ops in the letter to Woodhouse that the poem was beginning to "come down," was taking some sort of shape to him. Poems often float in a sort of nebulous haze — bright, but without contour; alluring, yet indefinite — just beyond the sphere of words. So undoubtedly *Hyperion* hung, yet what of it he got on paper during the Autumn we do not know. Very little, I imagine, and that little will, I believe, be found in the *Vision of Hyperion*, not in *Hyperion* proper. The reason for my belief I shall state in a later chapter. The only other poems which we know definitely to have been written before Tom's death, were a translation of a sonnet by Ronsard, sent to Reynolds in the letter of September twenty-first,[2] and a little *Prophecy* for George and Georgiana's expected child.

Of the first, little need be said. Keats called it a "free translation," and explained to Reynolds that the reason

[1] A slight tear, and a red seal, make the words bracketed conjectural.

[2] Sir Sidney Colvin says that the letter is dated "about Sept. 22." Buxton Forman gives the date, by inference, as "21 or 22 September."

why the sonnet lacked its final couplet was because "I had not the original by me when I wrote it, and did not recollect the purport of the last lines." As a matter of fact, the translation adheres very closely to the original, which, considering that Keats was remembering Ronsard's lines merely, shows how much they had impressed him. Woodhouse had lent him Ronsard's poems, and his opinion of them was that they had "great Beauties."

The *Prophecy* was sent in a long letter to George and his wife, written at intervals during October. It is ushered in by one of the very few passages of political discussion to be found in Keats's letters. I quote a part of it:

> "... as for Politics they are in my opinion only sleepy because they will soon be too wide awake. Perhaps not — for the long and continued Peace of England itself has given us notions of personal safety which are likely to prevent the reestablishment of our national Honesty. There is, of a truth, nothing manly or sterling in any part of the Government. There are many Madmen in the Country, I have no doubt, who would like to be beheaded on Tower Hill merely for the sake of éclat; there are many Men like Hunt who from a principle of taste would like to see things go on better, there are many like Sir F. Burdett who like to sit at the head of political dinners, — but there are none prepared to suffer in obscurity for their Country. The motives of our worst men are Interest and of our best Vanity. We have no Milton, no Algernon Sidney — Governors in these days lose the title of Man in exchange for that of Diplomat and Minister. We breathe in a sort of Officinal Atmosphere. All the departments of Government have strayed far from Simplicity, which is the greatest of strength. There is as much difference in this respect between the present Government and Oliver Cromwell's as there is between the 12 Tables of Rome and the volumes of Civil Law which were digested by Justinian ... Notwithstanding the part which the Liberals take in the Cause of Napoleon I cannot but think he has done more harm to the life of Liberty than any one else could have

> done: not that the divine right Gentlemen have done or intend to do any good — no, they have taken a Lesson from him, and will do all the further harm he would have done without any of the good. The worst thing he has done is, that he has taught them how to organize their monstrous armies."

This most temperate speech is certainly not the outpouring of a frenzied radical. Yet *Blackwood's* had implied as much for Keats by saying: "We had almost forgot to mention that Keats belongs to the Cockney School of Politics, as well as the Cockney School of Poetry." Since, in the eyes of "Z," the Cockney School of Politics meant Leigh Hunt daring to point the finger of sarcastic comment at the sacrosanct person of Royalty in the shape of George, Prince of Wales ("Prinny," as Hunt's sympathizers called him), and cheerfully going to prison as a corollary, the inference was that he, and Keats along with him, were dangerous radicals who should, at all costs, be suppressed. That the effort at suppression at least was real, we have seen only too clearly. I have lately run across a remark of Hazlitt's which is so little known and so pertinent to Keats's words that I will give it here. In 1824, Hazlitt was abroad, and in Rome he met an old friend, long absent from England, who inquired of him the state of things at home. "I told him," says Hazlitt, "that public opinion in England was at present governed by half a dozen miscreants, who undertook to bait, hoot, and worry every man out of his country, or into an obscure grave, with lies and nicknames, who was not prepared to take the political sacrament of the day, and use his best endeavours (he and his friends) to banish the last traces of freedom, truth, and honesty from the land. 'To be direct and honest is not safe.' To be a Reformer, the friend of a Reformer, or the friend's friend of a Reformer, is as much as a man's peace, reputation, or even life is worth. Answer if it is not so, pale shade of Keats, or living mummy of William Gifford!"[1]

[1] *Notes of a Journey through France and Italy*, by William Hazlitt. 1826.

Keats was a friend of reformers, reformers who were so, like Hunt, "from a principle of taste," but that was enough. Keats was no more blind to the state of affairs than was Hazlitt, but active participation in such things was not his part; he commented in private, but said no word in print, as he might easily have done through the medium of the *Examiner*. That he felt no desire to air his views in public gives the measure of his interest in such subjects, which was, in truth, very slight.

I have wandered far from the *Prophecy*, yet this poem was the direct result of his political cogitations, for, following the passage I have quoted, Keats gives his opinion of America, a country of which he knew nothing and the idea of which distinctly repelled him. This is what he says:

> "Dilke, whom you know to be a Godwin perfectability Man, pleases himself with the idea that America will be the country to take up the human intellect where England leaves off — I differ there with him greatly. A country like the United States, whose greatest men are Franklins and Washingtons, will never do that. They are great Men doubtless, but how are they to be compared to those our country-men Milton and the two Sydneys? The one is a philosophical Quaker full of mean and thrifty maxims, the other sold the very Charger who had taken him through all his Battles. Those Americans are great, but they are not sublime Man — the humanity of the United States can never reach the sublime. Birkbeck's mind is too much in the American style — you must endeavour to infuse a little Spirit of another sort into the settlement . . . If I had a prayer to make for any great good, next to Tom's recovery, it should be that one of your Children should be the first American Poet. I have a great mind to make a prophecy, and they say prophecies work out their own fulfillment —"

Here follows the poem beginning:

"Tis 'the witching time of night'"

and ending:

"Little Child
O' th' western wild
A Poet now or never!"

Unfortunately it was "never." American literature can boast no poet of the name of Keats, and the name itself is now on the road to extinction.[1] The poem was clearly an impromptu, and as such is pleasant. The idea of a flaming lyre perching on the top of the cradle, which no one dare touch, but which the child seizes and plays upon, is a pretty conceit.

The Ronsard sonnet and the *Prophecy* hardly counted, however, and *Hyperion* simply would not march. Keats tells George that he is going to start on a prose tale, as his mind is too active to remain idle, and he has "too many interruptions to a train of feeling to be able to write Poetry." But even the prose tale could not get written. Tom, Tom, Tom — his heart was full of Tom, who "looks upon me as his only comfort," he writes to George. Yet, even in the midst of all this misery, he never loses his sense of direction. At bottom, he knows himself a dedicated being: "The only thing that can ever affect me personally for more than one short passing day, is any doubt about my powers of poetry — I seldom have any, and I look with hope to the nighing time when I shall have none." Proud words, but prouder still are those earlier in this same letter where he is speaking of the reviews: "I think I shall be among the English poets after my death." This was no bombast, but the simple statement of a position which he recognized rather as a responsibility than anything else.

Youth naturally looks forward, but Keats seemed to be at a dead stop where no plans could be made. If he

[1] George Keats had eight children, but only two sons. There are many of his descendants in America to-day, but only one, a woman, who bears the name of Keats.

glimpsed the idea of spending a year with George in America, one look at Tom was enough to send the vision dissolving in smoke. He could not talk over such plans with Tom, he could not even ask Tom if he wanted to send a message to George, the effect of any recalling of his distant brother to the mind of the sick boy was too devastating, for he, certainly, would never see George again.

Yet once more, in this same letter, the leit-motif of sex becomes clearly audible, and this time it is the lady met at Hastings who is responsible. Keats encountered her quite unexpectedly "in a street which goes from Bedford Row to Lamb's Conduit Street." First Keats passed her; then, thinking better of it, turned back and joined her. They walked on "towards Islington," where the lady paid a call, and then back to the lady's lodgings in Gloucester Street, Queen Square. Her sitting-room Keats describes as "a very tasty sort of place with Books, Pictures, a bronze statue of Buonaparte, Music, æolian Harp; a Parrot, a Linnet, a Case of choice Liqueurs &c. &c. &c." Whoever this woman was, she had a heart and was quick at detecting atmospheres. She gave Keats a grouse for Tom's dinner, but would not let him kiss her at parting. This episode he recounts with such charming *naïveté* that I will give it in his own words. It is not quite the trivial matter it appears to be at first glance, rather is it the cat's-paw which indicates a change of wind.

> "As I had warmed with her before and kissed her I thought it would be living backwards not to do so again — she had a better taste: she perceived how much a thing of course it was and shrunk from it — not in a prudish way but in as I say a good taste . . . She said I should please her much more if I would only press her hand and go away. Whether she was in a different disposition when I saw her before — or whether I have in fancy wrong'd her I cannot tell."

Wronged or not, the lady met at Hastings was a kindly and an astute woman. What she saw was that Keats was quite different from the boy with whom, a year and a half before at Bo Peep, she had flirted lightly and inconsequentially as seaside vacationists have always done and always will do. This man, standing with the parrot, and the linnet, and the statue of Bonaparte in her little sitting-room, was another being entirely, one already marked by experience, a man who knew suffering, who faced tribulation, who had been stormed upon and would not yield. And he did not want to kiss her, only offered to do so as a polite attention. This experienced woman saw all this and more — she saw a preoccupation, an aloofness, a perplexed space on which she could not enter. Keats goes on to explain to George that he has "no libidinous thought about her — she and your George are the only women à peu près de mon age whom I would be content to know for their mind and friendship alone." If Keats were so susceptible as this, how came it that a woman whom he had previously found desirable left him completely passive? There is, I think, one answer, and one only — Fanny Brawne was in Hampstead and Keats had met her. I must defer speaking of Fanny Brawne for a few pages yet, but as she is the aura over this Autumn afternoon episode, and the concealed cause of a very important passage in the long letter to George, I must at least hint of her here as the clue to both. The passage in question follows immediately upon Keats's account of his afternoon:

> "I shall in a short time write you as far as I know how I intend to pass my Life — I cannot think of those things now Tom is so unwell and weak. Notwithstanding your Happiness and your recommendation I hope I shall never marry. Though the most beautiful Creature were waiting for me at the end of a Journey or a Walk; though the Carpet were of Silk, the Curtains of the morning Clouds; the chairs and Sofa stuffed with cygnet's down; the food

Manna, the Wine beyond Claret, the Window opening on Winander mere, I should not feel — or rather my Happiness would not be so fine, as my Solitude is sublime. Then instead of what I have described there is a sublimity to welcome me home. The roaring of the wind is my wife and the Stars through the window pane are my Children. The mighty abstract Idea I have of Beauty in all things stifles the more divided and minute domestic happiness — an amiable wife and sweet Children I contemplate as a part of that Beauty, but I must have a thousand of those beautiful particles to fill up my heart. I feel more and more every day, as my imagination strengthens, that I do not live in this world alone but in a thousand worlds. No sooner am I alone than shapes of epic greatness are stationed around me . . . According to my state of mind I am with Achilles shouting in the Trenches, or with Theocritus in the Vales of Sicily. Or I throw my whole being into Troilus, and repeating those lines, 'I wander like a lost Soul upon the Stygian Banks staying for waftage,' I melt into the air with a voluptuousness so delicate that I am content to be alone. These things, combined with the opinion I have of the generality of women — who appear to me as children to whom I would rather give a sugar Plum than my time, form a barrier against Matrimony which I rejoice in.

I have written this that you might see I have my share of the highest pleasures and that though I may choose to pass my days alone I shall be no Solitary. You see there is nothing spleenical in all this . . . I am as happy as a Man can be — that is in myself I should be happy if Tom was well, and I knew you were passing pleasant days. Then I should be most enviable — with the yearning Passion I have for the beautiful, connected and made one with the ambition of my intellect."

This was very likely written on the same day that Keats wrote to Woodhouse, for the passage is near the end of the letter, which was finally finished on Keats's birthday, October twenty-ninth. Certainly the idea of his being "with Achilles" or "with Troilus" is the same as the whole purport of the Woodhouse letter. But what does this

passage as a whole mean — that Keats really dreaded the idea of marriage and regarded the sex in general with cynical disdain? Scarcely this, I think. Let us take the disdain first, since it has been made a distinct point of attack by many critics. Because Keats was a great poet, we are apt to forget that he was also a very young and inexperienced man. The pronouncements of a boy of twenty-three in regard to the opposite sex are not to be taken too seriously, even when that boy is also a genius. After all, on what basis had Keats built his opinion? Why, on the extremely insecure one of the women he had known, to be sure. Just so, and who were these women? The Matthew girls, the Reynolds sisters, Mrs. Dilke, Mrs. Hunt — nice women, all of them, but not especially remarkable in any way. We get no impression of intellect from one or another, not a single member of the group seems to have been the kind of woman with whom Keats could have discussed literature on any plane of equality. The men, on the other hand, were distinctly intellectual, even those who have left no name to posterity. Apart from the obviously unusual men, like Hazlitt, and Hunt, and Haydon, there was a high degree of interest in literary affairs, and much critical acumen, displayed by all the group. Of course, Keats, being what he was, naturally gravitated toward men of mental power. The women he knew were simply the appendages to these men. Keats took them as they came, but long before his twenty-third year he had discovered that, whatever they gave him, it was not poetic stimulus; so far as poetry or intellect was concerned, time spent with them was wasted. Out of this grew the assumption that they were children merely, in all things which had to do solely with mind. Note, however, that Keats carefully says "the *generality* of women," which leaves room for a possible half-believed-in exception. Yet so little credence had he in his own exception, that, in the heat of his desire to create, he positively feared the

advent to himself of anything like passion. Absorption in a woman meant less concentration on poetry, or he imagined that it would, and that idea he could not brook, and all the more because he felt it stealing upon him. All the stuff about silken curtains and swan's-down sofas, was, I regret to say, nonsense and rhodomontade. For once, Keats was not perfectly sincere. This is rhetoric, a fault of which he was seldom guilty; but he had himself to convince as well as his brother and sister. How differently he wrote when he had nothing to hide, no *a priori* thesis to maintain. His sister-in-law he loved and admired, she was "a glorious human being"; he had no dread of her, she was George's wife, which fact lifted a load off his mind by placing her outside the orbit of his growing sexual consciousness. He could speak freely to her, and he did. This is what he says:

> "Your content in each other is a delight to me which I cannot express — the Moon is now shining full and brilliant — she is the same to me in Matter, what you are to me in Spirit. If you were here my dear Sister I could not pronounce the words which I can write to you from a distance: I have a tenderness for you, and an admiration which I feel to be as great and more chaste than I can have for any woman in the world."

The pity of Georgiana's departure! Keats had always needed a sister and never more than now. Fanny was too young; but then, I fear, Georgiana was that also at this period. As things were, he was obliged to meet the huge problem of sex alone, a problem with which he was, as yet, totally unfitted to cope.

Early in November, a peculiar thing happened. Keats received an anonymous, laudatory sonnet enclosing a twenty-five pound note. This communication was addressed to him at Teignmouth, from which place it had been forwarded to Taylor and Hessey. Naturally Keats was pleased at this evidence of sympathy, but he was rather

nonplussed by the bank-note. He kept it, however (what else could he do?), "if I had refused it," he wrote to George, "I should have behaved in a very braggadocio dunderheaded manner — and yet the present galls me a little, and I do not know whether I shall not return it if I ever meet with the donor, after whom to no purpose have I written." It has never been discovered who the donor was.

In the mean time, for all these diverse threads and threadlets of varying interests, Keats was really seeing very few people. "I have been but once to Haydon's, once to Hunt's, once to Rice's, once to Hessey's. I have not seen Taylor, I have not been to the Theatre." This was the state of affairs in the middle of October, when he had been back in Hampstead for two months. He made a point of going to Mrs. Wylie's as often as he could on Georgiana's account, but these calls at this time numbered only two. Tom, and Tom only, was his chief concern. The difficulty of procuring Abbey's consent to Fanny's visits was a constant source of trouble and misery. On one of them, Keats had taken her to call on some of his friends, which incensed Abbey, who knew nothing of the people in question and distrusted any one who was a friend of John's. After this, Keats wrote to Fanny suggesting, very covertly, that she should not mention her doings at Hampstead to the Abbeys. His endeavour to convey the idea without exactly countenancing deceit is very amusing. Having floundered somewhat awkwardly in making his counsel balance with his ideas of sincerity, he ends with the pathetic quibble: "Perhaps I am talking too deeply for you: if you do not know now, you will understand what I mean in the course of a few years." Since Fanny was fifteen, and by no means a stupid girl, she was probably perfectly capable of appreciating John's sophistry and being entertained by it.

On November fifth, Keats wrote to Fanny that he had seen Abbey three times to beg him to let her come and see

Tom, but had not been able to get his consent. "He says that once more between this and the Holydays will be sufficient," Keats reports. Incredible callousness to keep a sister from a dying brother! And I think the "once more" never took place. Tom was sinking rapidly; he died just as the sun was rising on the morning of December first.

Worn out with nursing, overwhelmed with grief, Keats stumbled out in the early morning sunlight to find Brown, to whom he had grown very close during the months in Scotland. Brown has told the story of their meeting, he says:

> [1] "Early the next morning, I was awakened in bed by a pressure on my hand. It was Keats, who came to tell me that his brother was no more. I said nothing, and we both remained silent for a while, my hand fast locked in his. At length, my thoughts returning from the dead to the living, I said, — 'Have nothing more to do with those lodgings — and alone too! Had you not better live with me?' He paused, pressed my hand warmly, and replied, 'I think it would be better.' From that moment he was my inmate.'

That same day Brown wrote to Woodhouse. The letter is dated "Hampstead, Tuesday 1st December" and says:

> [2] SIR:
>
> Mr. Keats requests me to inform you his brother Thomas died this morning at 8 o'clock quietly and without pain. Mr. Keats is pretty well and desires to be remembered to you.
>
> I am, Sir, your obed' & hum. Serv't
>
> CHAS BROWN."

It has always been thought that Tom Keats died in the night, but in this note we have direct proof to the contrary. There is an odd contradiction here, nevertheless, for Keats wrote to his sister, telling her that Tom had been so ill he

[1] Quoted by Sir Sidney Colvin in his *Life of John Keats*.
[2] Unpublished Letter. Author's Collection.

had delayed her visit, and adding "I cannot say he is any better this morning — he is in a very dangerous state — I have scarce any hopes of him." This letter is dated "Tuesday Morn" and postmarked "Hampstead 1 December 1818." If Tom were already dead, why did Keats write to Fanny as though he were alive? The answer is, I am confident, one of two things. Either Keats wrote this letter to Fanny to prepare her before going to see her and telling her in person; or Keats wrote the letter very early in the morning before Tom died and posted it just the same, again with the idea of preparation. It is just possible that Keats's landlord, being a postman, may have taken the letter to the post-office when he started on his duties, which would very probably have been before eight o'clock, but this seems so little likely that I think it may be dismissed.

Poor little Tom was dead, and Keats was desolate indeed. The idea of writing to George was terrible to him, and Haslam took on himself the sad duty. Tom was buried on Thursday, December third, in St. Stephen's Church, Coleman Street, where his father and grandmother were also buried.

We know very little of Tom Keats. What little we do know shows him to have been an eager, intelligent, and affectionate fellow. We have George's word for it that he understood John better than any one else did, and we can see from John's letters to him from Scotland how close the tie between them was. What, then, can be the meaning of a passage in an unpublished letter from Bailey to Taylor? The same letter, indeed, which told the story of Bailey's meeting with Lockhart. At the time when Bailey wrote (August twenty-ninth) Tom was known to be very ill; it was not, indeed, expected that he could live as long as he did. Bailey's words are these:

[1] "I do not well know what to think, whether good or

[1] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.

> bad of this young man; if it happen. It looks harsh to say it is happy; and yet from his character he must have lived a life of discomfort to himself & those with whom he was connected, if the character I have heard of him be just."

What on earth was the character Bailey had heard of him? We would give much to know. Whatever it was, Bailey declared himself "religiously persuaded, all is for the best." Very easy for Bailey to say, very conventional, very cold and unfeeling. Bailey the curate was fast murdering Bailey the man. Sinister though his remarks appear to be, I feel sure, from the other evidence at hand, that all Bailey's suggested charges amount to is that Tom was impatient with the cruelty of his fate, that he could not look calmly forward to a life of invalidism. Could any young man of nineteen? Bailey's clay feet peep from under his canonical robes very plainly in this passage. His usefulness to Keats was over; the friendship was nearing its term.

Tom's death left Keats peculiarly alone. As he told George, he still had Fanny and George and Georgiana. But Fanny was under Abbey's roof and Abbey's jurisdiction, and John was not a welcome visitor at Pancras Lane or Walthamstow, while George and Georgiana were half a world away, and distance, if it weakened no jot of the brothers' affection, did at least forbid the daily intimacy so necessary to continued understanding. Under these circumstances, Brown's invitation to Keats to come and live with him was a godsend. Brown had no family to be considered, and he and Keats had sampled their power of getting on together during the trying Scotch trip. They had no discoveries to make about each other; their "domesticating" together (the word is Keats's) was bound to work, and it did.

Wentworth Place was, as I have said,[1] a double house,

[1] See Vol. I, p. 469.

jointly owned by Dilke and Brown. Dilke's half was the larger, Brown, being a bachelor, needing less room. Brown's part of the house consisted of two sitting-rooms, front and back, on the ground floor, the first looking on the road, the last into the garden, which was not divided, but enjoyed in common by the two families; upstairs were two corresponding bedrooms, front and back, and somewhere a small cubby-hole in which a guest could be put up for the night. The arrangement was that Keats should have the front parlour and Brown the back. If Brown's windows opened on the garden, Keats's commanded a view of Hampstead Heath across the road, so it was a toss-up which had the most agreeable outlook. Keats was to pay his share of the living expenses, and each was to pursue the ordinary tenor of his life, working in their different studies. Keats was glad to escape the noise of the Bentley children, and altogether the arrangement offered many advantages. Apparently Keats did not move his goods and chattels from the Well Walk lodgings for some weeks, but I think Sir Sidney Colvin is wrong in considering Brown mistaken in saying that Keats came to him permanently on the very day that Tom died, for Keats himself wrote George, sometime in December: "Brown detained me at his House." What seems to have happened was that Keats came at once to Brown's, but had neither the strength nor the fortitude to get his things together and break up the old home for some weeks after Tom's death.

There can be no exaggeration of the blow which Tom's death was to John, and the courage with which he faced the great task of reorganizing his life was utterly admirable. But his nerves were badly shaken; morbid fancies assailed him. On one occasion, a white rabbit strayed into the Wentworth Place garden and Dilke shot it. Keats was very much upset by the occurrence, declaring that the rabbit was Tom's spirit. No reasons nor arguments had the



WENTWORTH PLACE

From a photograph taken by Louis A. Holman, Esq.

slightest effect upon him and he held to his opinion so earnestly that when the rabbit, cooked and dished, appeared on the table, no one felt any inclination to eat it, and it was sent away untouched. Yet, even when in the clutches of painful imaginings such as this, deep in his mind Keats knew, and his friends knew, that he must begin to live a life among people again as soon as possible. It was for this reason, undoubtedly, that they insisted upon his going to the prize-fight between Jack Randall and Ned Turner, on Saturday, December fifth. This famous fight took place at Crawley Hurst in Sussex, so that the excursion must have been an all day affair. The weather was wretched, but "that did not prevent a great crowd from assembling."[1] The excitement was tremendous. It was said that thirty thousand pounds had been wagered on the result. It was an event of prime importance to the sporting world, and one which no young man interested in boxing could afford to miss. Keats's interest in boxing may have waned at this time, but Reynolds was at hand to revive it, and as both Turner and Randall had trained at Hampstead Heath, Keats, who had probably watched them at work many times, was naturally interested in the fight. Interest in it was in the air. Pierce Egan, in describing the encounter and the day, says: "The interest excited in the Metropolis on the above night upon this event, to those persons out of the ring, may appear like a romance. Hundreds were waiting at the turnpike gates, along the road, to learn who had won." Randall was the victor in the thirty-fourth round.

Who Keats's companions at Crawley Hurst were, we are not told. It is no matter. The important thing for us to note is the wisdom and sanity on their parts, and on Keats's, which led him to make one of the crowd who trooped into Sussex that day.

The first weeks after Tom's death must have been

[1] *The Story of Boxing*, by Trevor C. Wignall.

bitter ones indeed. Keats's friends evidently felt that he must be helped to regain his footing upon life, and as an occasion like the Randall-Turner fight could not be happened on every day, they tried to think of other things. An opportunity to help in this effort came to Woodhouse early in December. Woodhouse had a cousin, a Miss Frogley, who lived at Hounslow. To her, Woodhouse had lent a copy of *Endymion*. Before she had time to read it, however, it was begged of her by a Mr. Henry Neville, "house surgeon to the late Princess Charlotte," Woodhouse remarks, by way of introduction. One day, Miss Jane Porter, then in the height of her fame as the author of the popular romances *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and *The Scottish Chiefs*, saw the book on Neville's table, and in her turn borrowed it. She returned it with a letter in which she spoke of the "very rare delight" it had given her and her sister, and hoped that "the ill-natured review will not have damped such true Parnassian fire." But more than this, she regretted that Mr. Neville did not know the author as she would have liked to make his acquaintance. Miss Frogley sent this letter to Woodhouse, who enclosed it to Keats, pointing out to him that this was an opening "for an introduction to a Class of society from which you may possibly derive advantage, as well as gratification, if you think proper to avail yourself of it." Keats did not think proper, or, at least, not at the moment. Woodhouse wrote on December tenth, Keats did not answer until the eighteenth. He found the suggestion gratifying, but not of epochal significance. Among other things, he said:

> "I should like very much to know those ladies — though look here, Woodhouse — I have a new leaf to turn over: I must work; I must read; I must write. I am unable to afford time for new acquaintances. I am scarcely able to do my duty by those I have. Leave the matter to chance."

That chance was very unlikely to cross Keats's orbit

with that of Miss Porter, he probably realized quite well, although, a little later, he did say to George:

> "I will be introduced to them if it be merely for the pleasure of writing to you about it — I shall certainly see a new race of People. I shall more certainly have no time for them."

The introduction never took place; Keats had no love for the literary blue-stocking.

It was not until the middle of December (at least that seems to be the time when the letter was begun) that Keats could bring himself to write again to his brother and sister-in-law in America. Then he was able to say to them: "I have scarce a doubt of immortality of some nature or other — neither had Tom." This is important, as it shows how gradually his religious belief left him. Later, he lost his belief in any future after death. Farther on in the letter, he adds:

> "There you are with Birkbeck — here I am with Brown — sometimes I fancy an immense separation, and sometimes as at present, a direct communication of Spirit with you. That will be one of the grandeurs of immortality. There will be no space, and consequently the only commerce between spirits will be by their intelligence of each other — when they will completely understand each other, while we in this world merely comprehend each other in different degrees — the higher the degree of good so higher our Love and Friendship."

The letter, a very long one, chats of many things, for, says Keats, "Within this last Week I have been every where," and he goes on to tell of calling on Georgiana's cousins, the Millars, in Henrietta Street; of going out with Mrs. Dilke to Walthamstow to see Fanny (Mr. Abbey does not seem to have objected to Mrs. Dilke as an acquaintance for his ward); of Haslam's constant kindness, his last attention being a gift of some especially thin paper

for transatlantic correspondence (we shall hear of this thin paper again); of Leigh Hunt's just published *Literary Pocket Book* for 1819 (the first of the series), which he declares to be "full of the most sickening stuff you can imagine," although his own sonnet *To Ailsa Rock* was in it; of dropping in on Hazlitt, and of going to see Kean in "Brutus a new Tragedy by Howard Payne, an American, on which his comment is: "Kean was excellent — the play was very bad." Hunt has asked him to meet Tom Moore, and taken him and Brown to Novello's where "we were devastated and excruciated with bad and repeated puns — Brown don't want to go again." The evening was "a complete set-to of Mozart and punning." The effect of this evening was to bring forth the following diatribe:

> "I was so completely tired of it that if I were to follow my own inclinations I should never meet any one of that set again, not even Hunt who is certainly a pleasant fellow in the main when you are with him — but in reality he is vain, egotistical, and disgusting in matters of taste and in morals. He understands many a beautiful thing; but then, instead of giving other minds credit for the same degree of perception as he himself professes — he begins an explanation in such a curious manner that our taste and self-love is offended continually. Hunt does one harm by making fine things petty and beautiful things hateful."

Since Hunt's morals were nothing short of impeccable, we can see that Haydon had been one of the many people whom Keats had been seeing, for Haydon applied the word "morals" to religious opinions, a subject on which he and Hunt were forever at odds.

In the midst of this confused jumble of activities, there suddenly peeps into the letter, and for the first time, a mention of Fanny Brawne. It was not only bull-dog grit which brought Keats back to the world; it was excitement, interest, delight and anxiety. It was, in short, love; for Keats was already deeply in love with Miss Brawne.

Nothing in Keats's life has been so misunderstood and misjudged as the relations between him and Fanny Brawne, and few women have had to suffer more from the ignorant malevolence of posterity than Fanny Brawne has. He, in his love for her, and she, in being the woman he loved, have been held up for pity and scorn by the critics of a hundred years. The odium began with Keats's friends, but Matthew Arnold capped the topmost tower of vituperation when he called Keats's love-letters vulgar, and said they were the letters of a "surgeon's apprentice." The snobbishness under the calumny proves where the stricture really lies. Matthew Arnold, for all his culture, his reiterated cry for "sweetness and light," was an arch-snob. His attitude toward the people he met when he toured America, lecturing under the auspices of P. T. Barnum, is one proof of this, and there are many others scattered through his letters. Arnold was a snob in regard to people, but quite the reverse where books were concerned. People, he did not understand; books he did. The man who could say of Keats's poems: "No one else in English poetry, save Shakespeare, has in expression quite the fascinating felicity of Keats, his perfection of loveliness"[1] was a shrewd judge of literary merit. But with all his shrewdness, Arnold never had the slightest conception of Keats's character. No inkling of the man, John Keats, ever entered his head. His very keenness of perception in literary matters, the fruit of years of training, perplexed and retarded his brain where people were concerned. And he had not the excuse of a jealous love, which in some measure exculpates Keats's personal friends.

Let us look at the matter a little more sympathetically, and see, if we can, what is the truth of this sad and bitter love between John Keats and Fanny Brawne.

Brown had a habit of going off somewhere every Summer and letting his house for the period of his absence.

[1] *Essays in Criticism. Second Series*, by Matthew Arnold.

In the Summer of 1818, while he and Keats were walking about Scotland, his tenants had been a widow lady named Brawne and her children, two girls and a boy. Fanny, the oldest of the family, was born on August ninth, 1800, and christened "Frances." A boy, Samuel, was the second child, he was still going to school at this period; the youngest was a girl named Margaret. Buxton Forman says that Mr. Samuel Brawne, the father, a "gentleman of independent means,"[1] died while Fanny was still a child. At the time of their taking Brown's house, the Brawne family were total strangers to every one whom Keats knew, but by the time Keats returned to Hampstead a strong friendship had sprung up between them and the Dilkes. The intimacy of the double house and the single garden would probably have produced such a result in any case, but in this there was unusual congeniality of tastes and tempers. So much had the Brawnes come to like Hampstead that, when the expiration of their lease and Brown's return made moving imperative, they moved no farther than Downshire Hill. The friendship with the Dilkes continued — continued, indeed for many years — and Keats, a constant visitor at Wentworth Place, must assuredly have met Miss Brawne not long after his return, but just when we do not know. Dilke thinks it must have been in October or November, but also says that it was soon after Keats came back from Scotland. Since he was in Hampstead by the middle of August, it seems more probable that the meeting occurred not later than some time early in September. If it cannot be stated as a certainty, nevertheless it appears quite evident that the Brawnes were the friends to whose house he took his sister, as mentioned in his letter to her of October twenty-sixth.[2] Something very like proof that this was so, lies in the fact that Abbey objected to his having

[1] Introduction to *Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne*, edited by H. Buxton Forman.

[2] See Vol. II, p. 116.

taken his sister there, as he surely would not have done had the call been on the Dilkes, and the Dilkes and the Brawnes were the only people to whom Keats would have been likely to take her, being the only houses in Hampstead where he was on an intimate footing in which there were ladies; for certainly, in view of the strict conventions of the period, he would never have dreamt of taking a young girl to a house where there were only men, such as Brown's, for instance. Then, too, what more natural than to want the two Fannies to make each other's acquaintance, considering that one was his only sister and the other the girl with whom he was in love. Fanny Brawne was only three years older than Fanny Keats, a difference of age the importance of which was bound to diminish with time. The two girls seem to have taken to each other at once, and her friendship with his sister appears to have been Fanny Brawne's chief comfort in the years immediately succeeding Keats's death.

Apparently Keats fell in love with Fanny Brawne almost as soon as he met her. He himself considered that it was immediately. Writing to her from Shanklin in the following July, he says:

> "I have, believe me, not been an age in letting you take possession of me; the very first week I knew you I wrote myself your vassal; but burnt the Letter as the very next time I saw you I thought you manifested some dislike to me. If you should ever feel for Man at the first sight what I did for you, I am lost."

That he had not met her at the time of the Charmian episode, seems indubitable. The man who was haunted by the Reynoldses' cousin for a night had not then written himself down anybody's vassal. But we are distinctly told that the call on the Reynoldses, during which he met their East Indian relation, was the first he made to Little Britain after his return, and, intimate as he was with the Reynolds

family, we may suppose that he went to see them as soon as he could. It is clear to see that, when he encountered the lady met at Hastings in the street near Bedford Row, he had given himself completely to Fanny Brawne, and had no room left for even the mildest philandering.

Keats considered Fanny Brawne to be dowered with extraordinary beauty, an opinion which must, I fear, be put down to a lover's partiality. Some beauty she seems to have had, however, of a quasi-statuesque kind, to judge by the silhouette of her by the French silhouettist Edouart. Edouart was famous for his likenesses, so probably this is a good portrait, as far as it goes. Her hair is said to have been very beautiful. I have a lock of it, which is of a rather usual brown colour, but it may have faded. At any rate, whatever its hue, she was most particular as to its arrangement, wearing it interlaced with ribbons after the fashion of the time. Her eyes were blue and sparkling. She seems to have been something of a "rattle," as it used to be called, liking smart sallies and badinage, and an innocent measure of flirtation. With the statuesque figure I have mentioned, this manner may well have jarred and offended a fastidious taste; not because it was tasteless in itself, but because it did not suit her.

Everyone who knew Fanny Brawne testifies to her determined and independent character. As Buxton Forman says,[1] probably from information supplied by her daughter, "it was not easy to turn her from a settled purpose." She was well educated for a girl of her class and period, and a voluminous, if not a particularly critical, reader, and this reading was by no means confined to light literature. Certain subjects which interested her, she followed up with steady perseverance; one of these — and one which she is supposed to have studied with some thoroughness — was the history of costume, "in which she was so

[1] Introduction to the Keats-Brawne Correspondence, edited by H. Buxton Forman.

well read as to be able to answer any question of detail at a moment's notice." She was also interested in politics, which she was wont to discuss with fire and animation. Altogether a girl of no mean mental abilities, although legend has so carefully obscured the fact. In later life, she wrote for *Blackwood's*. She spoke and read both French and German, and amused herself, years after Keats's death, by making translations of German stories.

There is no doubt that this somewhat imperious young woman — for such seems to have been the manner she turned to the world at the time — was used to admiration, and liked to dance. There were balls at Hampstead, balls at Woolwich, and those were the days just after Waterloo, when "military men" were much in vogue. Waltzing had just come in, and to waltz with an officer was bliss, in the eyes of eighteen. To Keats, who did not dance and who hated soldiers, this taste was incomprehensible and irritating, which is nothing to marvel at, perhaps. But I find no real evidence that Fanny Brawne was over-much occupied with these things, legend to the contrary notwithstanding. Our chief informant on this side of Miss Brawne's character is a most untrustworthy one — a cousin, who as a boy, seventy years earlier, had seen her in her mother's house.[1] His remarks verge on the malicious, and when we think how many years had elapsed, and how the legend had grown in the meantime, we shall not feel constrained to give his recollections unqualified credence.

At the time Keats met her, Fanny Brawne was just eighteen. That she had enough sweetness and depth of character to fall in love with the poet, I think there can be no doubt; and I believe she thoroughly satisfied the passionate part of Keats's love, satisfied it to a painful extent considering that they could not marry. She kept Keats in a burning agitation of desire which, under the circumstances, she was powerless to gratify. How much of

[1] Account published in the *New York Herald*, April 12, 1889.

this she may have understood, we have not as yet sufficient means of knowing. But the other side of love, the maternal side, she scarcely seems to have been mature enough to comprehend. She certainly developed, and grew more tender, as time went on; but the mothering which Keats so sorely needed, she had only begun to learn to give him when he died.

I think one must accord her a little pity, for she can have known very few hours of happiness in her love. It need not surprise us if the very violence of Keats's feelings kept her own somewhat in abeyance. She shows a rare patience with a lover who leaves her so much alone. He was forced to do so — granted. But how many girls would have understood the reason and not resented the fact. People always speak as though it should have been enough for her to have been engaged to such a genius. But only a *poseuse* engages herself to marry a poet, as such. To Fanny Brawne, Keats was the man she loved — "my Keats," she calls him — not a genius writing poems for posterity. And just as she is beginning to understand him, his needs, his moods, he falls ill, and after that is only the misery of a fast-failing hope ending in despair.

Fanny Brawne was no such charming and unusual character as George's wife, Georgiana Wylie, but neither was she the frivolous and heartless coquette which she is often represented to have been. Keats's friends thought her not worthy of him, but that would have been inevitable in any case, so highly did they regard him. That she married ten years after Keats's death, is nothing; ten years is a long time to cling to a memory so harassed and incomplete. Georgiana Keats married after her husband's death, but no one has dared to suggest that therefore she never loved George. If Fanny Brawne did, many years later, part with her miniature of Keats to Dilke, it is an unfortunate circumstance; and we are told that it was another unfortunate circumstance, nothing less than

financial disaster to her husband, which brought it about. But she did not part with the copy of *Lamia* which the poet gave her, for her daughter gave it, many years after her mother's death, to Mr. Buxton Forman, who kept it until his death when it passed into my hands.

Keats's mention of Miss Brawne in the letter to George was simply because he could not keep her out. The tone of his remarks shows how assiduously he was trying to throw dust in his brother's eyes as to his attitude toward her. From first to last, Keats was extraordinarily reticent about his love; it was too real, too deep, and he was too sensitive, to bear the thought of prying eyes and whispered speculations. The engagement, when it came, does not appear to have been announced in the usual manner; it leaked out, from all we can see, and became a settled fact to their mutual circle by degrees, as it were, gradually growing upon the consciousness of their friends from the evidence daily before their eyes. If Keats could not, for the life of him, keep Fanny Brawne out of his letter, he fondly believed he could throw his brother completely off the track by his manner of speaking of her. The charms of a Charmian he had no hesitation in detailing; Fanny Brawne's effect on him was beyond charm, so far beyond that he must belittle her or give himself away. Her first entrance into the letter is as follows:

> "Mrs. Brawne who took Brown's house for the Summer still resides in Hampstead — she is a very nice woman — and her daughter senior is I think beautiful and elegant, graceful, silly, fashionable and strange — we have a little tiff now and then — and she behaves a little better, or I must have sheered off."

Had Keats been a little more experienced, he would not have found this vivacious girl so strange. Fanny seems to have begun with him as she was accustomed to begin with all young men, a style of intercourse which Keats did not

in the least understand. Yet we can imagine that her very strangeness, and the piquant unusualness (in Keats's experience) of her address, combined with her entrancing frocks, were a considerable part of the lure in the first instance. What Keats was long in guessing was that this manner of wilful badinage was assumed to hide her real feelings, as there is considerable evidence to prove that she fell in love with him almost as soon as he did with her.

A couple of pages farther on in the letter, Keats is constrained to speak of her again. This time the dust is thrown in still larger quantities. Apropos of nothing, Keats suddenly begins:

> "Shall I give you Miss Brawne? She is about my height — with a fine style of countenance of the lengthened sort — she wants sentiment in every feature — she manages to make her hair look well — her nostrils are fine — though a little painful — her mouth is bad and good — her Profile is better than her full-face which indeed is not full but pale and thin without showing any bone. Her shape is very graceful and so are her movements — her Arms are good, her hands bad-ish — her feet tolerable — she is not seventeen [1] — but she is ignorant — monstrous in her behaviour, flying out in all directions, calling people such names — that I was forced lately to make use of the term *Minx* — this I think not from any innate vice but from a penchant she has for acting stylishly. I am however tired of such style and shall decline any more or it. She had a friend to visit her lately . . . a downright Miss without one set-off. We hated her and smoked her and baited her and I think drove her away. Miss B. thinks her a Paragon of fashion, and says she is the only woman she would change persons with. What a stupe — She is superior as a Rose to a dandelion."

Dust though this was, there were grains of truth in it. Keats was at once repelled and drawn. Drawn, alas, more by the girl's bodily attractions than by the spirit which

[1] This was an error.

animated them. This was one reason for the hard course of his love. There was too much of the merely physical in its composition. Unsatisfied desire kept him forever dwelling upon things which could not be, to the exclusion of that part of his lady which craved a fuller understanding. Fanny Brawne deserved better than this. Looking at their relations without bias, thrusting our minds away from the conventional interpretation, I think we must admit that he wronged her far more seriously than she ever wronged him. Her patience with him was unbounded; his with her was no bigger than a millet seed.

It has been my good fortune to have come upon a number of Fanny Brawne's letters, mostly written after Keats's death, to Fanny Keats. They are the property of a gentleman who does not wish his name to be disclosed. But this anonymity need alarm nobody; there is no doubt as to the authenticity of the letters, as I, who have seen a couple of the originals, can testify. From these letters, we gain a very clear idea as to what sort of woman Fanny Brawne really was. Several of these letters, or rather parts of them, I must keep for insertion where they properly belong, but a few, dating from later years, I will give here, as a corrective to Keats's portrait.

The first was written in the November after Keats's death:

> " . . . my brother was in the country . . . As soon as he returned I sent him with a note for you and heard to my great surprise you were not expected for a week — I hope by that time you will have an opportunity of reading . . . I go on as usual reading every trumpery novel that comes in my way spoiling my taste and understanding, as for acquaintances I see none unless I take the trouble of going after them."

Certainly Fanny Brawne was in mourning at this time, but what is ingrained does not alter. No giddy butterfly,

such as she has been represented, could ever have been in the state of seeing no acquaintances. As for the novels, what a human touch they bring in, and let us not forget that Jane Austen was an omnivorous reader of that branch of literature.

The letter from which the next quotation comes is undated:

> "I have been expecting some account of the pleasure I think you must have felt at King Lear though in it you did not see Kean to the best advantage and though the play itself is spoiled.[1] I have only seen Miss Edmiston in Lady Macbeth and admired her person but did not think much of her acting. In Cordelia she may be better . . . the play itself is not one I should wish to see again. Read it as originally written and you will soon see the difference. They say, as a foolish reason for acting it in its present state that formerly it was too affecting but I am convinced that the more people are affected the more they are pleased . . . Dr. Johnson who saw it before the alteration said it was too much to bear and that nothing should induce him to sit it out again."

There is intelligence here, and artistic feeling. The girl who wrote that passage was far more fitted to be Keats's wife than the wife of one of the officers who graced the Hampstead balls. That Keats's judgments were final to her, and that she was capable of assimilating his opinions and learning from him, the next quotation shows:

> "I have therefore sent you Spenser instead, which you will feel the more pleasure in reading as you will find the best part marked by one who I have heard called the best judge of poetry living — they were marked for me to read,[2] and I need not say with what pleasure I did so . . . The serious poems of Lord Byron were given me by a school fellow . . . I can remember being half wild about them learning and repeating continually when alone but as my

[1] It was given in a cut and bowdlerized version. [2] See Vol. II, p. 414.

dear Keats did not admire Lord Byron's poetry as many people do it soon lost its value with me. If I am not mistaken he thought Manfred one of the best."

Another undated letter contains a clue to what I believe to be the real Fanny Brawne. What she was in very truth, which is far indeed from what Keats — first in his misunderstanding blindness; later in his sick suspicion — sometimes conceived her to be.

"How delightful it would be to have you with me tonight. I am quite alone I am always glad to get my *family* out (to provoke me they seldom ever go) and then highly favoured indeed is the person I would wish for or even admit. There is one and only one person in the world besides yourself that I would admit tonight and her coming is about as possible as yours — I was asked out to tea by some friends who thought I must feel 'lonely' — for my part I think people are all mad."

A young woman who likes to be alone has resources within herself, resources of mind; Fanny Brawne, eagerly looking forward to a few hours of solitude which only two people whom she knows (both women) are worthy to break in upon, can scarcely have been as avid for society as tradition would lead one to suppose. Either Keats's death changed her radically, or she never was the flibbertigibbet some of his friends chose to imagine. The latter is, I am certain, the correct view. As we follow the rest of Keats's short life, we shall be struck again and again by her sweetness, her loyalty, her charity and prodigious patience. She was not a woman to wear her heart on her sleeve. When Keats died, she was prostrated and seriously ill for some time. The severity of her illness is proved by the fact that her hair lost much of its colour.[1] A lady who knew her at this period recollects her as "a dignified looking woman, fair, but pale,"[2] and she remembers being told

[1] Unpublished letter of Fanny Brawne.
[2] Quoted in *Sweet Hampstead*, by Mrs. C. A. White.

that Miss Brawne had "*lost her colour in an illness she* had after her engagement with Keats was broken off." Broken off! It never was. Death, and death only, had the power to separate them, but the Hampstead gossips did not know that.

So strongly, so deeply, so unalterably did Fanny Brawne love Keats, that when, twenty years later, Severn returned to England and wished to see her, she could not bring herself to receive him, the associations connected with him were so painful; she feared to open a wound which was only too likely to bleed afresh. It is true that she finally married, but not until ten years had passed. Her husband was a Spanish Jew named Lewis Lindo; he afterwards changed his name to Lindon. Whatever comfort and peace she may have found in this marriage, she seems always to have cherished the memory of Keats as something sacred, but not to be spoken of. His letters she guarded with scrupulous care, and later, much later, when her children were grown up, she enjoined them to treasure these same letters, saying, with what must have been almost a pang of understanding and loyalty, that "they would some day be considered of value."[1] That this was her final sacrifice for Keats, his reputation, his vital claim on posterity, we cannot doubt. Far from condemning the suggestion which induced her children, years after her death, to permit the publication of these same letters, we should esteem it the crowning act of a love that, with the contemplation of years, had become heroic. She died in 1865.

I have so far outrun time, because it is not my intention to carry this book beyond the moment of Keats's death. The vicissitudes of his after fame have been amply treated by Sir Sidney Colvin. Fanny Brawne's life, as we know it, I have given here, since no clear understanding of her character can be gained without taking

[1] Introduction to Keats-Brawne Correspondence, by Buxton Forman.

all we can learn of her into consideration; also, this knowledge will help to clarify many things in the ensuing chapters.

Keats, then, in mid-December, 1818, was already irrevocably in love with Fanny Brawne. He felt enslaved, that is abundantly evident, not so much by Fanny herself as by love. His liberty, his unvexed concentration on poetry, he believed to be menaced by the presence of this imperious preoccupation from which he could not tear himself. It was a bitter and a glorious experience, but his alternations of hope and fear made his existence rather a fevered one. Undoubtedly his state of mind kept him from morbidly grieving over Tom's death as much as he otherwise would have done, and that was a good thing. All through December, Keats was suffering the fate of every young man in love. Will she? Won't she? Does she? Does she not? His mind struggled with these vital questions every hour of the day. Yet Keats, encompassed by this haze of conjecture, agonized with apprehension, lifted up on the wings of an almost intolerable hope, made a fine effort to keep himself face forward towards the life he had mapped out and go on with his work. This was no easy task, but Keats had a strong will and an indomitable pride; so to work he went, because he was determined to do so. This is what he says to George:

> "I am passing a Quiet day — which I have not done for a long while — and if I do continue so, I feel I must again begin with my poetry — for if I am not in action mind or Body I am in pain — and from that I suffer greatly by going into parties where from the rules of society and a natural pride I am obliged to smother my Spirit and look like an Idiot — because I feel my impulses given way to would too much amaze them — I live under an everlasting restraint — never relieved except when I am composing — so I will write away."

He wanted to write *Hyperion*, but found the doing so

very difficult. In the letter to George, just before the second mention of Miss Brawne, he wrote:

> "I think you knew before you left England, that my next subject would be 'the fall of Hyperion.' I went on a little with it last night, but it will take some time to get into the vein again. I will not give you any extracts, because I wish the whole to make an impression. I have however a few Poems which you will like, and I will copy out on the next sheet."

The first of these copied poems is the rather long imaginative piece, *Fancy*. It is written in trochaic heptasyllables, the same metre that Keats had employed in the *Mermaid Tavern* and *Robin Hood*. Keats is never too happy in this metre. Professor de Sélincourt thinks that he "was never completely successful," with it "till he wrote the 'Eve of St. Mark.'" Professor de Sélincourt forgets that the *Eve of St. Mark* is iambic, not trochaic, a much easier metre to write. Why the trochaic metre did not suit him, there is no saying; but it is a fact that his best poems were all written in iambics, whether the form were blank verse, heroic couplet, sonnet, or the heptasyllables of the *Eve of St. Mark*. Tripping metres were not in Keats's line. Keats heralds the poem to George very simply: "Here are the Poems — they will explain themselves — as all poems should do without any comment."

No explanation was possible really. *Fancy* is once again a catalogue of "luxuries," but how inferior to *I Stood Tiptoe*, even though Keats had acquired a far greater firmness of presentation and a less adolescent attitude. The freshness of delight is not here. This is a sober catalogue of beautiful facts, a whole year's gamut of beauty. Each season adds its quota, but Keats presents these things with the careful eye of observation rather than with the effervescence of wonder. This is Keats soothing his harassed soul by remembering the loveliness, quaintness, and charm

of Nature, which, to him, was perennially peace-giving. In the imaginative world where his fancy strays, the three flowering seasons exist together; or rather, whatever is attractive in each one of the three is isolated and included. Some of the lines are extremely pleasant, as, for instance, these:

> "Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
> Meagre from its celled sleep;
> And the snake all winter-thin
> Cast on sunny bank its skin;
> Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
> Hatching in the hawthorn tree,
>
>
>
> Then the hurry and alarm
> When the bee-hive casts its swarm;
> Acorns ripe down-pattering,
> While the autumn breezes sing."

The last line is poor, and Keats left it! That is a pity; he should have been able to improve it into something less commonplace. Yet he did work over the poem quite a little; there are many changes between the version sent to George and that printed in the *Lamia* volume. It is from the last that I have quoted.

The second poem copied, *Bards of Passion and of Mirth*, is again heptasyllabic, and again Keats essays the trochaic form. The poem was originally written in his copy of Beaumont and Fletcher, on a blank page opposite *The Fair Maid of the Inn*. Keats told George that the subject was "the double immortality of poets." Undoubtedly the "bards" were Beaumont and Fletcher. It has been suggested that Keats found the idea of his poem in one of Wordsworth's, the third of the series printed under the title *Memorial of a Tour in Scotland*; if so, he coupled it with recollections of Drayton's *Muses Elysium*.[1] The two poems taken together may very possibly have en-

[1] See Vol. I, p. 563.

gendered *Bards of Passion.* But no matter whence it came, the poem is dull, not felt, heavy to read and leaving no impression afterwards.

Keats speaks of these poems as "specimens of a sort of rondeau which I think I shall become partial to — because you have one idea amplified with greater ease and more delight and freedom than in the sonnet." Keats was always longing to "free" his verse, always trying experiments which should unshackle it from convention. That he never quite succeeded in his experimental efforts, was the fault of his time rather than of his endeavour. Why he spoke of these poems as rondeaux can only be attributed to ignorance. As Professor de Sélincourt aptly remarks: "Keats's idea of the Rondeau form must have been somewhat vague."[1] They are no more rondeaux than they are limericks. For some inexplicable reason, *Bards of Passion,* when it was published in the *Lamia* volume, was entitled *Ode* — it is as little of an ode as it is a rondeau.

The third poem sent to George was a ten line piece, *I had a dove and the sweet dove died.* Keats says he wrote it off "to some Music as it was playing," which fact probably accounts for both its subject and its diction. The last two lines have a certain quaint charm:

> "I kiss'd you oft and gave you white peas —
> Why not live sweetly as in the green trees?"

Two more poems we know to belong to the year 1818, but to just what part of it we are in ignorance. I put them here at the end of the year simply because I can find nothing like an exact date for either of them. The first in point of interest is a three stanza lyric without title, always known by its first line: *Hush, hush! tread softly! hush, hush, my dear.* Charlotte Reynolds told Buxton Forman that the song was composed to a Spanish air which she used to

[1] *The Poems of John Keats,* edited by E. de Sélincourt.

play to Keats. She said that sometimes she played to him for hours. This fact is the chief reason for my putting the poem immediately after *I had a dove*, since it seems more than likely that it was Charlotte Reynolds's playing which had evoked that poem. In the case of *Hush, hush! tread softly!* the words seem to have been absolutely set to the air, for singing purposes. In truth, so lyrical is this little piece, so "singable," that a tune seems bound to belong to it. Alas! The "Spanish air" is forever lost to us. Slight as the song is, it has a haunting quality, and a delicacy which in no way obscures its underlying passion. In the last line but one Keats originally wrote "his soft twin-eggs"; Buxton Forman, not unnaturally, balked at "his" in this connection, but having found two manuscripts of the poem — one in a copy of the *Literary Pocket-book* for 1819, the other in a copy of *Endymion* — he was relieved to discover in the first of these an alternative reading, "her soft brace" which he promptly made use of. Buxton Forman states that the version in the *Endymion* is "evidently later" than the other, and that it corresponds more closely to the text as given by Lord Houghton, but that the holograph lacks the final couplet. I have, however, found still a third version in the Woodhouse Book in the Morgan Library. It is not in Keats's handwriting, but in Woodhouse's, still Woodhouse undoubtedly copied it from one of Keats's manuscripts. In this Woodhouse copy, the offending "his" gives place to "her." The last line of the poem is Keats, Keats himself, the Keats who loved Fanny Brawne; its very extravagance is a key to his sensations. Whether he wrote the poem before he knew her or not, this was how he felt about her and this sort of thing was his undoing. Here is the couplet:

> "The stock-dove shall hatch her soft twin-eggs and coo,
> While I kiss to the melody, aching all through."

To the people who object to this side of Keats, we can only

say: "Love me, love my dog"; it is a part of him and cannot be ignored.

The second poem which we cannot accurately place is a little fragment published without title. It begins: "Where's the Poet, show him! show him." In the British Museum volume of Keats manuscripts it is dated "1818." I think we can approximate a closer date if we consider the little piece in the light of Keats's letter of October twenty-seventh to Woodhouse, for the poem says practically the same thing as the letter. Keats's answer to the question in his first line is:

" 'Tis the man who with a man
 Is an equal, be he King,
Or poorest of the beggar-clan,
 Or any other wondrous thing
A man may be 'twixt ape and Plato;
 'Tis the man who with a bird,
Wren or Eagle, finds his way to
 All its instincts; he hath heard
The Lion's roaring, and can tell
 What his horny throat expresseth,
And to him the Tiger's yell
 Comes articulate and presseth
On his ear like mother-tongue."

The manuscript ends with a line of dots, showing that the poem was discontinued, but not finished. This is not surprising; what was written was far from promising.

There is a third poem, if it can be called such, which, on no evidence at all, I am willing to attribute to this year. Buxton Forman judged it "to belong to the end of 1818 or thereabouts," and although he does not give his reasons for this opinion, I can find no cogent ones for assigning it to a different date. Here, then, we will let it stand. It is a Spenserian stanza, which Keats wrote at the end of Canto II, Book V, in his copy of the *Faerie Queene*. It was first published by Lord Houghton in his 1848 edition, prefaced

by a note in which the editor speaks of Keats's sympathy with Spenser's revolutionary "Gyant," and declares that in this stanza Keats expressed "his conviction of the ultimate triumph of freedom and equality by the power of transmitted knowledge." Professor de Sélincourt comments on both the stanza and Lord Houghton's note upon it by saying: "The lines are interesting as one of the few illustrations in the verse of Keats of his democratic sympathies." This is all very well, but are not both gentlemen taking a mere *jeu d'esprit* a trifle too seriously? Keats's stanza, which seems to me too unimportant to quote here, is, I think, a joking expression of the far-reaching effect of print and how by means of it almost anything may be accomplished. As to Keats's democratic sympathies, I have already shown how little he really considered such matters. His remarks to George about America[1] do not show him in much sympathy with the great democratic experiment of his time. The truth is that all efforts to foist upon Keats a social economic conscience break down before his complete indifference on the subject. Twist his words about how we may, in the very few passages in his letters or his poems which can be made to serve, they are always capable of either another meaning entirely or of being attributable to a very youthful enthusiasm for the political shibboleths of the Hunt school. Ethical, Keats certainly was; and quite as certainly he had no faith in any regeneration of mankind through the medium of political reform. But the main truth is that he lived aside from all such things; his work lay elsewhere.

If Keats were determined to keep himself up to writing, he was no less determined that his walks, talks, tiffs, and makings-up with Fanny Brawne should undermine the general tenor of his life as little as possible. He made an immense effort, but did not entirely succeed. Severn's later recollections always have to be taken with a grain of

[1] See Vol. II, p. 109.

salt, but what he records of this time seems so likely to be true that I think we may believe it to represent the facts without much exaggeration. In Sharp's biography of the painter, we find the following:

> [1] "During the Autumn of 1818 Severn saw little of Keats. When they did meet, he noticed that his friend was distraught and without that look of falcon-like alertness which was so characteristic of him . . . It certainly seemed as though the poet were losing strength and energy, for he ceased to take much interest in intellectual matters, and declared himself unable to take long walks or even indulge in any unnecessary exercise."

Severn may have been thinking of the months which preceded Tom's death. But as he himself was only convalescent from his serious illness in the middle of October, we may take his description as covering the weeks succeeding Tom's death as well as the earlier ones. Probably Keats refused to walk with Severn that he might walk with Fanny Brawne; we know that they were in the habit of strolling on the heath together. Severn is quite wrong as to Keats's lack of interest in "intellectual matters," as we have abundantly seen, but when we remember Severn's teasing propensities, we cannot wonder that Keats shunned him at a time when both patience and spirits were sorely tried. Yet we are indebted to Severn for this description of Keats's appearance, and for recording the apathy which people, even friends, who did not chime with his mood produced in him.

Hazlitt had been lecturing again, this time on the English Comic Writers, but Keats had been too tied down to go and hear him. It shows how cordially Hazlitt had come to regard him that, on one occasion when Keats went to see him at his lodgings in York Street, the older man lent him his lectures, now preparing for the press, to take home

[1] *Life of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp.

with him.[1] We know this from the fact that Keats quotes a long passage from one of the lectures in his December-January letter to George, and the book did not appear until April, 1819.

Keats, meanwhile, had begun to settle down in Wentworth Place, the good postman, Bentley, carrying over his books in a clothes-basket. Then came an invitation from Dilke's father to come with Brown and stay a few days at Chichester; and another from Dilke's sister, Mrs. Snook, to come to Bedhampton after the Chichester visit. Keats tells George: "They say I shall be very much amused. But I don't know — I think I am in too huge a Mind for study — I must do it — I must wait at home and let those who wish come to see me. I cannot always be (how do you spell it?) trapsing."

Keats was slowly regaining his tone; he could even see that the *Quarterly* article was not entirely without a touch of silver lining. "Gifford's attack upon me has done me service," he declares to George, "it has got my book among several *sets*." He also finds that his tastes are widening out: "A year ago I could not understand in the slightest degree Raphael's Cartoons — now I begin to read them a little." One remark which Keats made at this time is illuminating as to the point of view which was beginning to be his. He had been looking at a series of engravings taken from the frescoes of some Italian church. These frescoes were, he says:

> "Full of romance and the most tender feeling . . . But Grotesque to a curious pitch — yet still making up a fine whole — even finer to me than more accomplish'd works — as there was left so much room for Imagination."

In his appreciation of suggestion, Keats joins the moderns; although this, like so many others of his apprehended artistic truths, never got very far into his poetry.

[1] *Life of William Hazlitt*, by P. P. Howe.

This book of engravings Keats had seen at Haydon's. Haydon had been of distinct benefit to him hitherto; but now the man's boundless egotism led him into an act of positive cruelty. He asked Keats for money, as he did everyone else, to be sure, but Keats was not fair game. He had just been through a terrible experience, he was not well (his sore throat had come back), his financial circumstances were not too satisfactory. But did Haydon care? Not a bit. Keats answered by telling him that he had "a sort of fire" in his heart that would "sacrifice every thing" he had to his friend's service, but begged that he "try the long purses" first. It is rather a pathetic letter. Keats admits that he feels in himself "all the vices of a Poet, irritability, love of effect and admiration," after which acknowledgment he goes on to tell Haydon why to lend money just then would be highly inconvenient:

> "I have a little money which may enable me to study, and to travel for three or four years. I never expect to make anything by my Books: and moreover I wish to avoid publishing — I admire Human Nature but I do not like *Men*. I should like to compose things honourable to Man — but not fingerable over by *Men*. So I am anxious to exist with[out] troubling the printer's devil or drawing upon Men's or Women's admiration."

Haydon replied with one of his usual rhapsodies, but left the question of whether or not he would renew his demand in the air.

Tom's death had altered affairs considerably. His allowance was, of course, discontinued, and Keats, who had always lived with his brothers on terms of share and share alike whichever one's money it was at the moment, found himself on very short financial commons. He had spent so much of his own principal that there was very little left, and Abbey declared himself puzzled as to the legal aspects of the case. Since Tom was dead, ought not

his share of the grandmother's legacy to be joined to the grandfather's fund and so not become available until Fanny came of age? For Keats to lend anybody money in the predicament in which he was, was madness; and worse than that, weakness. He simply had not the strength of mind to refuse. On Christmas Eve, he wrote to Taylor, begging the loan of thirty pounds. "Ten I want for myself — and twenty for a friend," he innocently adds, promising to pay by the middle of January. Whether the "friend" were Haydon or not, we cannot tell; either he was not, or Taylor refused the money, for none of it went to Haydon, who continued to importune Keats during the following weeks, and Keats (how he got it, we do not know) was at last able to scrape up thirty pounds for him, a loan which Haydon never repaid. Keats's weakness in the matter of lending money annoyed his more sensible friends as it annoys posterity. At one time, he had over two hundred pounds of bad debts on his hands.

Christmas drew near, and the time for going to Chichester. Keats alleged his sore throat and let Brown go alone. His throat was practically always sore at this time, with only occasional intervals of relief, and still no one guessed the fatal headway which tuberculosis was making.

Just before Christmas, Keats got himself into a little difficulty. He paid a call in Little Britain and discovered that Mrs. Reynolds took it for granted that he was to dine there on Christmas Day, and when he said that he had another engagement, the fact was not taken in too good part. Keats hated to hurt people's feelings, and the Reynoldses were old friends, as his friendships went, so he sat down and wrote a letter of explanation to Mrs. Reynolds. This is surely one of the most awkward epistles on record. Keats was very much flustered, too flustered and determined as to what he intended to do to excuse himself with either tact or plausibility. He assured Mrs. Reynolds that the engagement was a previous one; that he should

not have accepted it, but "kept in Mind old friends," if he had not expected to be in Hampshire on Christmas — a singular reason. He ends in this remarkable manner:

> "I will not speak of the proportion of pleasure I may receive at different Houses — that never enters my head — you may take for a truth that I would have given up even what I did see to be a greater pleasure, for the sake of old acquaintanceship — time is nothing — two years are as long as twenty."

Since he had known the Reynoldses just two years, the inference is obvious. But what about the more important inference, the ill-concealed "greater pleasure"? Where was he dining? Charlotte Reynolds told Buxton Forman that she thought the other invitation was from Mrs. Brawne. It most certainly was, but not until the discovery of the letters of Fanny Brawne of which I have already spoken was it possible to realize the full significance of that evening. I think it is very certain that it was on this Christmas night that Keats and Fanny Brawne became engaged. In one of Miss Brawne's letters is what may very well be an allusion to this fact. She is writing on December thirteenth, 1821:

> "I dined with Mrs. Dilke a day or two ago . . . we dine with them on Christmas day which is like most peoples Christmas days melancholy enough . . . I cannot think it will be much worse than mine for I have to remember that three years ago was the happiest day I had ever then spent."

Three years before was this very Christmas of 1818. Not only do Fanny Brawne's words seem clearly to point to a happiness altogether unusual, entirely beyond any other happiness of any previous days, even of this Autumn, but the evidence of circumstance seems to back up my theory. Keats could not bring himself to go to Chichester until almost the middle of January. To be sure, there was the

sore throat, but that was still with him when he finally went. More than that, there is the *Eve of St. Agnes*, which I think was the direct result of the engagement; and there is the *Ode to Fanny*, which fits so well here that it must be taken into careful consideration.

Perhaps I am wrong in speaking of an engagement, perhaps Fanny Brawne took some time to give her absolute consent. Whatever she may have said to Keats, we know from her letter what she felt, and she must have allowed Keats a considerable measure of hope or the *Eve of St. Agnes* would not have been written. Even supposing the engagement to have been made on that Christmas Day, that is no bar to the ups and downs of their relations during the rest of the Winter. Other lovers have experienced the same difficulties of adjustment, hosts of them. If Fanny Brawne's love for Keats grew stronger and fuller as time went on, it is but another proof that hers was not a shallow nature.

The critics never cease to wonder at Keats's sudden spurt of productiveness, beginning in January with the *Eve of St. Agnes*, and then, after a vacant interval, bursting out in magnificent effervescence with *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, the *Ode to a Nightingale*, the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, and the less important odes *To Psyche*, *On Melancholy*, and *On Indolence*. The clue I believe to lie in just the fact of Keats's reciprocated love for Fanny Brawne.

There is no doubt that Keats was a difficult and uncomfortable lover. His self-imposed absences must have been extremely trying. Keats leaves Fanny Brawne for months at a time, and waxes jealous and miserable if she goes out for an evening. Within two weeks of this Christmas Day, he left her for nearly three weeks. Indeed I think Fanny had much to bear.

Keats dined again at the Brawnes', in company with the Dilkes, on the Saturday of the following week. This occasion he slurs over to George by remarking that

"nothing particular passed." Perhaps not, nothing he cared to relate to his family in America, at any rate. But, if George and Georgiana were at all quick of observation, they might have learnt something of the way the wind was blowing from this little straw of an observation which follows immediately upon the "nothing":

> "I never intend hereafter to spend any time with ladies unless they are handsome — you lose time to no purpose. For that reason I shall beg leave to decline going again to Redhall's or Butler's or any Squad where a fine feature cannot be mustered among them all!"

There is no difficulty in reading between the lines here, for Fanny Brawne was, in Keats's eyes, a houri of loveliness. A curious aspect of Keats's state of mind was that he could not rid himself of the feeling that his having fallen in love with Miss Brawne was in some way a disloyalty to his brother and sister-in-law. It is unnecessary to point out how essentially morbid such an idea was, but morbidness and Keats were old companions. Even in the first flush of his acknowledged love, he could write to George and Georgiana:

> "I have no thought pervading me so constantly and frequently as that of you — my Poem cannot frequently drive it away — you will retard it much more than you could by taking up my time if you were in England. I never forget you except after seeing now and then some beautiful woman — but that is a fever — the thought of you both is a passion with me but for the most part a calm one."

How he tortured himself, poor boy! And how he harried Miss Brawne! Let us suppose for a minute what we do not certainly know — that the *Ode to Fanny* was written at this time. Why not? The mood of the poem was almost a chronic one with Keats, it is true; but there are expressions in the *Ode* which show clearly that, at the time he wrote it,

the engagement was a very recent thing. If we recollect that *Hyperion* was balking badly, we shall quite understand the first stanza, and I am positive that the "wintry air" was actual fact. Keats was housed with his throat and knew he must not go out, hence his "Beckon me not into the wintry air." Fanny was evidently going to a dance — a New Year's dance, Buxton Forman suggests — and Keats was not well enough to go with her. The lines which prove the engagement to have been but just made are:

> "... do not turn
> The current of your heart from me so soon."

This is from the third stanza; in the seventh, he says again:

> "Ah! if you prize my subdued soul above
> The poor, the fading, brief, pride of an hour;
>
> Let none else touch the just new-budded flower."

The theme of the poem may be paraphrased as: Be not too kind to the men with whom you are going to dance tonight, and his plea

> "... keep me free,
> From torturing jealousy."

If I am right in thinking that an engagement, or at least what is called an "understanding," had been agreed to between the lovers on Christmas night, the *Ode to Fanny* most certainly belongs to the very end of December or the beginning of January.

The sore throat began to ease a little, and Keats's conşcience was not quite comfortable about old Mr. Dilke and the Snooks. Perhaps, too, being himself, he felt the need of rest, of a dull and uneventful interval to soothe the poignance of his sensations. At any rate, to Chichester he went about the middle of January, and from there to the Snooks'. All we know of the exact dates of these visits is

that he told George: "I was nearly a fortnight at Mr. John Snook's and a few days at old Mr. Dilke's," and that he and Brown wrote a composite letter to the Dilkes from Bedhampton on January twenty-fourth, in which Brown reported that he and Keats had walked there from Chichester the day before.

A pleasant little sketch of Keats at this time is contained in a letter which Mrs. Dilke wrote to her father-in-law as a sort of introduction to his expected visitor, whom he had never met. This is what Mrs. Dilke thought it wise to say concerning him to an elderly man who might be a little puzzled at first:

> "You will find him a very odd young man, but good-tempered, and good-hearted, and very clever indeed."

The stigma of "oddness" is the price a myopic world always exacts of genius, but since he was also "good-tempered, and good-hearted," even in the eyes of this same world, we may conceive that he was even odder than Mr. Dilke senior would have been likely to think, for, after all, he was certainly a genius.

Thus Keats wrenched himself away from Fanny Brawne and went down to join Brown at Chichester.

CHAPTER X

SWIFT CURRENTS

KEATS was not "very much amused" at Chichester; in fact, he was not amused at all. It could hardly be expected that any young man much in love, who had recently declared himself and been given considerable encouragement, if nothing more, would find any place not in the vicinity of his idol highly amusing; but in this case, Mr. Dilke's method of entertaining his "odd" guest seems even odder than the guest himself. A couple of "dowager Card parties," as Keats calls them, were the sole outings of his "few days" there. We may be sure, however, that he and Brown strolled round the neighbourhood and wandered into the cathedral. Keats dearly loved cathedrals, we have already seen him flying from Margate to Canterbury, and before this year, 1819, is out we shall find him flying again, from the Isle of Wight to Winchester. Chichester cathedral fell in comfortably with a sort of pseudo-mediæval mood which he had fallen into. Why a mediæval mood? one may ask. Well, consider the circumstances a little. Keats had been working on *Hyperion*, with no great impulse, however, if his own general discouragement with his progress on it can be taken as evidence. After the fateful Christmas dinner at the Brawnes', he was less in tune with it than ever, probably. The excitement of his new situation as an accepted, or quasi-accepted, lover turned the current of his thoughts in an entirely different direction. The age of chivalry had always stood to Keats as a symbol of the strength and beauty of love. Its *décor* was to him the perfect setting for romance. The Endymion story had meant a dream of the ideal, but by no effort could it be made to represent the actual. Knights and ladies, on the other hand, were strictly human. They could, without

difficulty, be taken to personify real people. Yet his point of view can hardly be supposed to have been as square-toed as this. Rather he found in the *entourage* and type of thought of chivalric legend something sympathetic and alluring. The over-plus of emotion under which he was labouring, suddenly deflected from its natural outlet of intercourse with Fanny Brawne, sublimated itself into creative energy, and the immediate result was the composition of the *Eve of St. Agnes*.

St. Agnes' Eve is January twentieth, a date which was practically synchronous with Keats's arrival at Chichester. Since he left Chichester on Saturday, January twenty-third, and was there only a "few days," he cannot have been more than at the very beginning of his visit on the twentieth. Woodhouse states[1] that the poem was written "at the suggestion of Mrs. Jones," a remark which has much puzzled Sir Sidney Colvin, and no wonder, since no such person makes her appearance anywhere else in any of the known sources of information as to Keats's life or work. When we remember Keats's habit of concealing real names from the prying curiosity of the indefatigable Woodhouse by substituting imaginary ones in their stead, the puzzle becomes a puzzle no longer, I think. We know nothing of Mrs. Jones, because there is nothing to know; there was no such person. Keats hid the name of the real lady under a conventional Jane Doe pseudonym. There was a lady, but who was she? If we hazard a guess, circumstances leave us hovering between two very possible persons. She was either Mrs. Brawne, or old Mrs. Dilke, she may even have been Fanny Brawne herself, but this I think improbable. Let us take the two chances and weigh them. We will suppose that Keats left Hampstead for Chichester on either Tuesday or Wednesday, January nineteenth or twentieth; it could not have been much earlier, as we have seen. Undoubtedly his last evening before starting was spent in

[1] Woodhouse Commonplace Book (*Poems II*). Crewe Collection.

company with the Brawnes. Somehow the conversation may have turned on St. Agnes' Eve. "You will be away on St. Agnes' Eve," or "Why, you are going down on St. Agnes' Eve," are remarks which, in such a case, may very well have been made, leading to a subsequent narration by Mrs. Brawne of the well-known legend, with the suggestion that it would make a good plot for Keats. So much for the Mrs. Brawne theory. As to Mrs. Dilke, if Keats did actually arrive at Chichester on St. Agnes' Eve, a family so steeped in antiquarian lore as the Dilkes are most likely to have mentioned the day, and this conjecture holds good even if he had arrived the day before. On the whole, I am inclined to consider the Mrs. Brawne theory as the most tenable on two accounts. The first is that Keats had every possible reason for not mentioning Mrs. Brawne's name to Woodhouse; his secretiveness in regard to his intimacy with the Brawnes with people who did not know them would have forced him to this, while, in the case of old Mrs. Dilke, only a sense of fitness could have induced him to obscure her identity. The second account is that Mrs. Brawne would have been much more likely to have suggested that Keats try his hand at a poem on the subject than old Mrs. Dilke, who had known him only a scant twenty-four hours or so. Young Mrs. Dilke at Wentworth Place is a third possibility, but as Keats's familiar footing in Dilke's house was known to everybody, there seems no reason why he should have objected to mentioning her to Woodhouse. Mrs. Brawne, then, I think it undoubtedly was to whom Keats owed the suggestion that he write a poem on St. Agnes' Eve.

Packed up with his clothes and brushes and other things in the portmanteau which Keats carried with him to Chichester was some of the thin oblong paper which Haslam had given him to write to America upon. Perhaps Keats intended to start a letter to George while he was gone. However that may have been, it was not as a letter to George

that the oblong sheets in the portmanteau were to serve, they were destined for a more important fate, for on them, in the dull and quiet moments surrounding the "dowager Card parties," Keats wrote a part, or sketched the whole, of the first draft of the *Eve of Saint Agnes*. His own account of the proceeding sent later to George is as follows:

> "I took down some thin paper and wrote on it a little poem call'd St. Agnes' Eve, which you shall have as it is when I have finished the blank part of the rest for you."

From his speaking of "the *blank* part of the rest," it seems clear that the poem was not even finished in skeleton form until after his return to Hampstead. Lord Houghton, who probably had the information direct from Brown, says that the poem "was begun on a visit to Hampshire, at the commencement of this year [1819] and finished on his return to Hampstead." The manuscript of the first draft is still in existence.[1] I, who have handled it many times, can testify to the thinness of the oblong paper. That sheets of such extreme frailty should have lasted intact for a hundred years is due simply to the fact that they have had but four owners during the time. This manuscript was one of the many that fell into Severn's hands on Keats's death. There never seems to have been any regular distribution of Keats's belongings. Brown, in England, divided Keats's books among his friends in a rough and ready fashion, allotting to each friend such volumes as each had given the poet, returning lent copies to their rightful owners, and as to the rest, giving some away and keeping the remainder himself. Others of Keats's circle appear simply to have appropriated to themselves whatever relics of Keats they happened to have. Severn evidently regarded himself as heir to such papers as Keats had carried to Rome. Severn certainly meant well in constituting himself the guardian

[1] Author's Collection. Locker-Lampson manuscript referred to by Buxton Forman.

of these papers, but his kind-hearted simplicity has proved most unfortunate to posterity. For Severn, in his delight at the constantly increasing number of Keats's admirers, could not bring himself to refuse requests made to him for "something in the poet's handwriting," and to meet these demands he took to cutting up long manuscripts and giving them away a few lines at a time. One of the copies of *Otho the Great* was mutilated in this way, as was also the *Pot of Basil.* This manuscript of the *Eve of St. Agnes* lacks the first seven stanzas, or the first original sheet. It has been suggested that the sheet was separated from the rest to point out a mistake in the proof which Keats referred to in a letter of June eleventh, 1820, to Taylor. But since Woodhouse had already made a transcript of the poem for his Commonplace Book, which was always at Taylor's service for consultation,[1] since also the mistake which Keats desired corrected was perfectly clear without any reference to the manuscript, it seems far more likely that the separation of the first sheet from the others was due to one of Severn's blundering kindnesses. Whatever occurred, no trace of this missing sheet has yet been found, although the letter to Taylor has been preserved.[2]

The sources of the *Eve of St. Agnes* have occupied commentators not a little. Some of the suggestions made have been strangely fantastic, as is inevitable, for rare indeed is the commentator who is content with a simple solution to any query. Leigh Hunt, who reprinted the poem entire in his *London Journal* on January twenty-first, 1835, interpolating between the stanzas a most interesting running commentary, and reprinted the whole again in his volume *Imagination and Fancy*, published in 1845, is quite content with citing the old and well-known legend in this connection. The rites proper to be performed on St. Agnes' Eve were probably as familiar to earlier generations of English-speaking people as are those of All Hallowe'en to ours.

[1] Buxton Forman. [2] Author's Collection.

The commentator who should seek far afield for the source of a poem dealing with the ceremonies of the latter night would, I think, be treated to an amused smile. Even supposing that Keats needed any source other than the conversation with "Mrs. Jones," there was popular rumour and the day itself. I cannot leave this aspect of the poem, however, without just glancing at two of the most recent suggestions as to source. They are both ingenious, but each is, I believe, beside the mark, although for very different reasons.

The first of these suggestions was made some seventeen years ago by Dr. Henry Noble MacCracken.[1] It is to the effect that certain analogies to the *Eve of St. Agnes* are to be found in Boccaccio's early prose romance, *Il Filocolo*. To my mind, these analogies are by no means so cogent as they seem to Dr. MacCracken, and for a very simple reason: every one of them belongs to the stock in trade of romantic narrative and is almost as much a commonplace of the type as is the existence of a love episode itself. In *Il Filocolo*, the two lovers, Florio and Biancofiori, he a Moorish prince of Spain, she a Christian damsel, are brought up together, but later separated. Their childish affection for each other has ripened into passion with the years, and their enforced separation is a great grief to both. On one occasion, Florio learns that Biancofiori is shut up with her ladies in an impregnable tower. On the eve of a festival, he manages to get himself conveyed into the tower hidden in a basket of roses. Emerging therefrom, he throws himself on the mercy of Biancofiori's aged attendant, Glorizia, begging her to get him speech with her mistress. Glorizia promises to hide him in Biancofiori's bed-curtains. She then seeks out Biancofiori and invents a fictitious dream in which, she tells the lady, she beheld Florio entering Biancofiori's chamber while she slept. Biancofiori, much comforted by the dream, mingles in the festivities, al-

[1] *The Source of Keats's 'Eve of St. Agnes,'* in *Modern Philology*. Vol. V. 1907–1908.

though she cannot conceal her melancholy mood. Evening arrived, and Florio duly conducted to his hiding place, Biancofiori comes into the chamber, where, assisted by Glorizia, she undresses, the old crone taking care to keep her impatience for Florio at stretch by suggesting that he may perchance come, that he may not, in short that either event is possible, but that neither can be predicted. Biancofiori at last in bed, Glorizia leaves her, and after a time the lady falls into a troubled sleep from which she is soon aroused by Florio making impassioned love to her. As he does so, two magic carbuncles suddenly glow with a soft light, causing the chamber to become as bright as day. Biancofiori, who has been dreaming the actual scene, cannot at first reconcile herself to an awakening which she hardly comprehends to be a realization. Florio finally convinces her that the fact and the dream are identical. The lovers vow themselves to each other, a ring is exchanged, and the night is passed in complete understanding and mutual satisfaction.

Boiled down to absolute resemblance, what do these parallels amount to? Next to nothing, really. A young man and a young woman are deeply in love with each other, but separated by untoward circumstances. Keats's untoward circumstances take the form of a family feud dividing their two houses. Keats need only have thought for a moment of *Romeo and Juliet* to have conceived that much of his plot, and the old attendant as go-between is but a duplicate of the nurse in Shakespeare's play and in any one of a dozen old romances. A lover concealed in his lady's chamber is part of the machinery of romantic narration the world over, and Keats's method of handling the scene is as unlike Boccaccio's in *Il Filocolo* as can well be imagined. Keats's lovers flee away into the night together. Nothing of the sort happens in *Il Filocolo*. It has been suggested that the magic carbuncles duplicate Keats's moonlight through the stained glass window. But why? Keats needed

no carbuncles to remind him of the moon. We know that he was reading the old Spanish romance, *Palmerin of England*, in Southey's translation just about this time, and I have already shown how many were the purely colour passages he underscored in that book.[1]

It will be seen, therefore, that this whole episode from *Il Filocolo* bears only the very vaguest resemblance to the structure of the *Eve of St. Agnes*. As to the question of whether Keats could ever have read, or been told of, *Il Filocolo*, I think we must accord it a decided negative. At the time Keats wrote the *Eve of St. Agnes*, he could not read Italian. He read the *Decameron* in an English translation,[2] and Dante in the translation of the Rev. H. F. Cary. In the following September, Keats had started to read a little Italian, beginning with Ariosto, "not managing more than six or seven stanzas at a time," but that he had reached any such point by the beginning of the year, that he had even looked at an Italian book with a view to reading it at that date, there seems no possible reason for supposing. And why on earth should he have wanted to read this extremely dull early work of Boccaccio when there were so many better books which he might have read? For in the original he must have read it, if he read it at all, since there was no English translation, and only a French seventeenth century one which there is no reason to believe he had ever come across. More cogent than mere speculation on the subject is the fact that Hunt suggests no such source for the poem, and he himself was the most likely person to have turned Keats's attention to *Il Filocolo* if there had been any turning at all, which it seems perfectly evident there was not. Boccaccio took parts of his tale from the old French romance, *Florice et Blanchefleur*. It would take more study than I propose to give to the subject to deter-

[1] See Vol. I, p. 103; also Appendix C.

[2] Sir Sidney Colvin quotes Woodhouse to the effect that the translation read by Keats was that published by Allen Awnmarch. Fifth Edition. 1624.

mine where Boccaccio departed from, and where he kept to, his original. Suffice it to say that a fragmentary English mediæval version of the romance, quoted by George Ellis in his *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romance* published in 1806, a book which Keats may have read, contains none of the particular incidents upon which Dr. MacCracken bases his theory. In the light of all this, I think we may dismiss Dr. MacCracken's speculation as interesting, but without a leg to stand on.

The second suggestion of source which I have mentioned was made three or four years ago by Miss Martha Hale Shackford.[1] Miss Shackford considers that she has found certain close scenic and verbal parallels between Keats's poem and Mrs. Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*. And the truth is she has found them; but, owing to the perfectly unrelated manner in which she has been obliged to cull them from Mrs. Radcliffe's novel, they prove nothing more than a vein of reminiscence, if I may so express it. Miss Shackford presents her theory with perfect temperateness and common sense, and without demanding more for it than it will bear. The only question is whether it can be made to bear anything at all of real importance. It is quite true, as Miss Shackford says that:

> "The setting of Mrs. Radcliffe's story possessed many elements that seemed revived by Keats. There was the solid grandeur of an ancient Gothic castle, with shadowy galleries, mysterious staircases, moonlit casements, and gorgeous apartments hung with arras glowing with medieval pageantry. The feudal life with old retainers serving an arrogant master and his carousing friends is pictured in both works."

Yet there is an essential difference here, for Mrs. Radcliffe's story is laid frankly in the eighteenth century, its mediæ-

[1] *The Eve of St. Agnes and the Mysteries of Udolpho*, by Martha Hale Shackford. Reprinted from the *Publication of the Modern Language Association of America*. Vol. XXXVI. No. 1. 1921.

valism is pure *pastiche*, while Keats's tale is chivalric legend throughout.

For the midnight scene in the chapel in the *Eve of St. Agnes*, Miss Shackford finds striking resemblances in two widely separated scenes in the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, one in Chapter VIII, the other in Chapter XXXI. For various references to the old woman in the poem, there are others to an old woman in Chapter XLIII and XLIV of the novel. The young woman guiding the old woman down the staircase in *St. Agnes* is very closely tallied in the last of these chapters, but the errands which bring about this parallel of events are entirely different.

Miss Shackford cites as important the journey through winding passages to a room, and indeed the analogies here are rather striking. In Stanza XIII of the poem, Porphyro

> . . follow'd through a lowly arched way,"

and eventually

> ". . . found him in a little moonlight room
> Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb."

And in Stanza XXI are these lines:

> ". . . Safe at last
> Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
> The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd and chaste.'

In Chapter XXXII of *Udolpho* we read: "I have only to go . . . along the vaulted passage and across the great hall and up the marble staircase, and along the north gallery and through the west wing of the castle, and I am in the corridor in a minute," and another passage of much the same purport appears two chapters farther on. While toward the beginning of *Udolpho* there are several resemblances: "As she passed along the wide and empty galleries, dusky and silent, she felt forlorn and appre-

hensive"; and again, some hundred pages earlier, "the lattices were thrown back, and showed . . . the moonlight landscape"; and twenty pages beyond this, "The couches and drapery of the lattices were of pale green silk, embroidered and fringed with green and gold."

Now these are slight things, and I do not think can be properly called parallels at all, yet there is an atmosphere in them which, taken apart from the special atmosphere of Mrs. Radcliffe's book, does connote the atmosphere of Keats's poem. It is as though Keats found lying round in his mind certain knick-knacks and sparkling trinkets dropped from an old dismantled image which when furbished up and set to a new and different use prove most acceptable additions to an already ordered scheme.

Miss Shackford gives various references to stained glass windows, one of which

> ". . . by the blunted light
> That the dim moon through painted casements lends"

is not from *Udolpho* at all, but from another book of Mrs. Radcliffe's, *The Emigrants*. There are also various references to lutes, and to the sound of singing. One line of *St. Agnes:*

> "And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old"

Miss Shackford considers "very subtly related, possibly, to a verse quoted in an early chapter of the romance, about a landscape,

> 'Beauty sleeping in the lap of horror.'"

I wonder if this is such an unusual metaphor as Miss Shackford thinks, it does not seem so to me.

I wish I had space to quote more of Miss Shackford's analogies, but I have given enough to show how she has determined her parallels. To find verbal verisimilitudes between a poem three hundred and seventy-eight lines long

and a four volume novel was a task requiring unflagging zeal and bright enthusiasm, and Miss Shackford has certainly proved how deeply the *Mysteries of Udolpho* had sunk into Keats's mind. Whether this was all reminiscence from an earlier reading, a reminiscence which sprang into life when contemplating the special scenery which he needed for *St. Agnes*, or whether it derived from a recent re-reading of the romance, there is no telling, but it does seem as though there were too many verbal echoes to leave the whole matter to recollection. For instance, Mrs. Radcliffe says: "Silver tripods, depending from chains of the same metal, illumined the apartment"; Keats writes:

"A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door."

Keats's old nurse exclaims: "Well-a-well-a-day!" Theresa, in *Udolpho*, uses the same exclamation in a slightly different form, "A-well-a-day." Keats puts: "By all the saints I swear"; Mrs. Radcliffe has: "You must promise me by all the saints."

In the slang of the day, Miss Shackford "started something" with her theory, but what she started was not precisely what she expected it to be. For, closely as certain effects, certain expressions, certain scenic properties from Mrs. Radcliffe's book seem to have stuck in Keats's mind, deftly as he appropriated these effects, these expressions, these properties to his own use whenever he needed them, it was always something indubitably his own that they were made to serve. In any other than the most fragmentary and superficial sense there is no slightest resemblance between the *Eve of St. Agnes* and the *Mysteries of Udolpho*. Not in plot, touch, nor temper are the two books in the least alike. Miss Shackford has shown us that Keats was far more familiar with Mrs. Radcliffe's works than had been supposed, that is the principal result of her inquiry. The way in which Keats's mind hugged impressions is finely demonstrated in her paper, as too is his

remarkable way of divorcing subsidiary impressions from a total effect, so making it possible for him to separate the single from the general, the essential from the unimportant, that which was suggestive to him from that with which he had no concern. Taken thus, as a quarry, the *Mysteries of Udolpho* may well be reckoned as one of the books which had considerable to do with Keats's imaginative development. Looked at from this angle, Miss Shackford's paper is of great value; seen from the viewpoint of a possible "source" for *St. Agnes*, in the generally accepted meaning of that term, her researches lead practically nowhere.

As a matter of fact, Keats probably owed as much of the peculiar atmosphere of his poem to Coleridge's *Christabel* as to the *Mysteries of Udolpho*. Even some of Miss Shackford's particular parallels are duplicated in *Christabel*. There are the hanging lamps, for instance, which I have already cited, and which in *Christabel* become

"The lamp with twofold silver chain."

In *Udolpho*, Emily has a favourite dog who follows her and barks; Keats brings in a "wakeful bloodhound"; Coleridge has a "mastiff bitch." Keats's debt to *Christabel* was very possibly a conscious one; his debt to the *Mysteries of Udolpho* was in all likelihood quite unconscious. For Keats experienced books as most people experience life, and his leanings upon Mrs. Radcliffe seem to have assumed to him something of the form of a childhood recollection not completely risen to the plane of thought. At the same time, we must not forget that the *Mysteries of Udolpho* was almost certain to have been on old Mr. Dilke's shelves, and Keats may have been moved to glance through it again in an idle moment, without any conscious connection between it and his poem; the result of such re-reading would be to stir up forgotten pools of memory of which he himself would scarcely be aware.

The *Eve of St. Agnes* is one of those poems, often among

the most beautiful, which spring out of reading. It is written in the Spenserian stanza, and contains more than one reference to Spenser. Here are bits of Cary's *Dante*; suggestions of the Elizabethans; chips of Chatterton; a fragment of Burton; a little flash from Shakespeare. For all these strands of reminiscence I must refer my readers to Buxton Forman's and Professor de Sélincourt's editions. Extraordinarily interesting as these things are, I cannot dwell too long upon them here. It is high time that we returned to the poem itself, and to its subject, which is its one indisputable source — the legend of St. Agnes' Eve.

Leigh Hunt adduces Brand's *Popular Antiquities* as a convenient book in which to read of the legend. This work, first published in 1813 in an edition of two quarto volumes edited by Sir Henry Ellis after Brand's manuscript notes, was probably well known to Keats. In it is given a brief sketch of the legend proper, and a much longer commentary on the popular superstitions and ceremonies which had grown up about it. St. Agnes was a Roman virgin, a convert to Christianity, who was sentenced to suffer martyrdom in the tenth persecution under the Emperor Diocletian, A.D. 306. According to the legend, "She was condemned to be debauched in the public stews before her execution, but her virginity was miraculously preserved by thunder and lightning.[1] Not long after her death, her parents, going to pray at her tomb, saw in a vision a host of angels with their dead daughter in the midst, and a lamb standing beside her as white as snow, an emblem of her spotless purity. With the centuries, St. Agnes assumed in the popular mind a special tenderness toward pure young girls, and took them under her protection to the extent of according them the power of seeing their future husbands in a dream on one night of the year, the eve of the day sacred to her. Certain rites had to be performed preparatory to the receiving of this boon, of which the principal seems

[1] Brand's *Popular Antiquities.*

to have been that the girl who courted St. Agnes' favour must fast all day and go to bed fasting, and must not kiss man, woman, or child until her dream lover broke the fast with her. This was called "fasting St. Agnes' fast." The young girl must lie on her back with her arms clasped beneath her head, and falling asleep in this position she will dream that a man is standing beside her bed, and that man she will marry. These rites differ somewhat in different places, and Brand gives one or two variants of them, but as the one I have given was the one followed by Keats we need not concern ourselves with the others. Among many quotations which show the prevalence of the custom, Brand prints some lines from Ben Jonson's *Satyr*, which were probably familiar to Keats. They are:

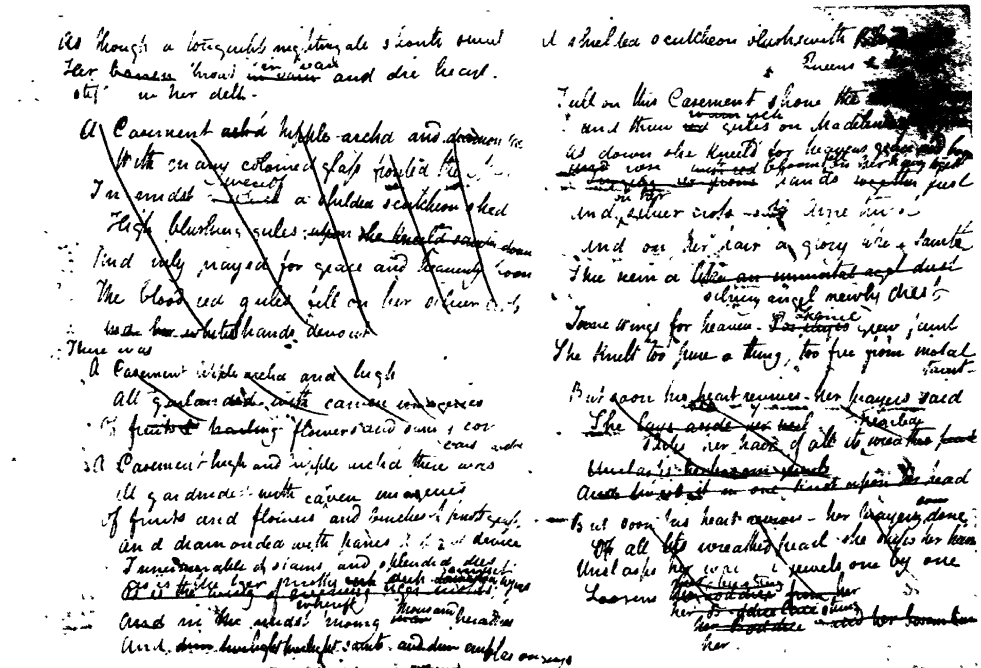
> "And on sweet St. Anna's[1] night
> Please you with the promis'd sight,
> Some of husbands, some of lovers,
> Which an empty dream discovers."

To see one's love in a dream, and know that however many ups and downs the waking course of true love is obliged to undergo the desired end will certainly be accomplished eventually, must have been a very sympathetic idea to Keats, enduring his first separation from Fanny Brawne. His whole soul was in *St. Agnes' Eve*; his humanity and his genius sublimating themselves through the longing of separation into a finely tempered whole. This is Keats's first completely successful long poem, and the first of his narratives not disfigured by glaring immaturities. Perhaps Hunt is not far wrong when he says: "Among his finished productions, however, of any length, the *Eve of St. Agnes* still appears to me the most delightful and complete specimen of his genius." And he goes on: "It is young, but

[1] Professor de Sélincourt points out that Ben Jonson probably changed the name "Agnes" to "Anna" out of compliment to Queen Anne, for whose entertainment the Masque of *The Satyr* was performed.

full-grown poetry of the rarest description; graceful as the beardless Apollo; glowing and gorgeous with the colours of romance." Hunt's expression here is a little florid, but has he not gone to the core of the matter? And Hunt knew what he was talking about, no man better. Here is what he has to say of Keats's technique: "Let the student of poetry observe, that in all the luxury of the Eve of St. Agnes there is nothing of the conventional craft of artificial writers; no heaping up of words or similes for their own sakes or for the rhyme's sake; no gaudy common-places; no borrowed airs of earnestness; no tricks of inversion; no substitution of reading or of ingenious thoughts for feeling or spontaneity: no irrelevancy or unfitness of any sort. All flows out of sincerity and passion. The writer is as much in love with the heroine as the hero is; his description of the painted window, however gorgeous, has not an untrue or superfluous word; and the only speck of a fault in the whole poem arises from an excess of emotion."

An excess of emotion there certainly is in the *Eve of St. Agnes*, but however much of a fault that may be in certain types of poetry — and unquestionably controlled emotion is generally far more effective than that which is overexpressed — in this particular poem I cannot regard it as a fault. The poem is singularly homogeneous in texture. It is all one long sensuous utterance. Not sensual — it is never that — but lyrical. It is an expression of lyrical emotion presented in the form of a tale. In it, Keats writes as poet and astounding craftsman. Every scrap of effectual knowledge which he knew he wrought into it; his feeling for colour, his sensitiveness to verbal music, his power of condensed suggestion, these are all here. His very profusion is a part of his effect. No one of Keats's manuscripts which I have seen is so carefully worked over as this. A glance at the reproduction of two of the pages of the first draft will show how shrewdly and carefully he shaped and reshaped his material, always with the object



TWO PAGES OF THE FIRST DRAFT OF "THE EVE OF ST. AGNES"

From the original manuscript in the possession of the author

of increasing some splendour, making clearer some manner of feeling, adding some brighter lustre to an image, captivating the ear with some stranger, more unexpected, harmony of sound. This was Keats following his own advice tendered to Shelley a year and a half later to "load every rift with ore." His mood was the antithesis of astringent. His prime care was to give his emotion full rein, only endeavoring to keep the expression of it to the level of his best achievement, and in this he signally succeeded. To those people who are forever condemning the sensuous aspect of Keats's conception of love, there is but one answer. That sensuous beauty of this kind is its own perfect excuse, and we already know that natural beauty of all sorts stood to Keats as a religion, or, at least, as the sole possible way of expressing the truths which were religion to him. *St. Agnes' Eve* was a great choral hymn written to celebrate his love for Fanny Brawne. To say that he had to be separated from her to bring it into existence, is merely to state a truism of the functioning of the creative faculty. Poetry is seldom written in the midst of an action or a state of being; reflection is its essence. It is the perfume of something which has been, but is not; a remembrance and a hope, but a fact no longer.

I suppose that few poems in the English language are so well known and so much loved as the *Eve of St. Agnes.* It stands as a personal efflorescence to generation after generation of young people. This is a poem for youth, and youth alone is capable of appraising it. As we grow older, we may come to prefer others of Keats's poems to it, but to the age to which it appeals it is completely satisfying, and little more praise can be given to any poem than this. Browning has spoken of "the last of life for which the first was made," a consoling idea to those who see life constantly shortening in front of them; but was he right? I fear not. Youth is more than age, energy worth more than meditation. The *Eve of St. Agnes* is a pæon of youth, a great

masterpiece and epitome of one of the principal ages of man.

I call the *Eve of St. Agnes* a "choral hymn" and I do so advisedly, for its effect is not single and melodic, but massed and contrapuntal, and this double effect is kept up throughout. In the first place, there is the environment and the time set with the extreme of clarity in the opening stanzas of the poem: the freezing Winter night, outside the castle; inside, the chill chapel with the monuments of dead knights and ladies who seem to "ache in icy hoods and mails." The cold night is made none the less bitter by the draughty gusts of loud music which sweep along the corridors, and this metallic music, this piercing sound of "silver, snarling trumpets," gains an added touch of magnificence and chill from its juxtaposition to the sculptured architraves from which

> "The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
> Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
> With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts."

This, which we may call the motif of night, and cold, and heartless splendour, is never allowed to sink out of consciousness for very long; even when the love motif itself is in full swing, in the scene between Porphyro and Madeline in Madeline's chamber, suddenly across the silence

> "The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
> The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,
> Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—
> The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone."

And it follows through to the end of the poem, in the description of the arras which lines the passages along which the lovers flee,

> "Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar,"

in the drunken Porter asleep "in uneasy sprawl," in the "wakeful blood-hound," in the "foot-worn stones" of the hall, and the door groaning upon its hinges.

The second theme of the poem is the story of Porphyro and Madeline, with its symbols of the fast and the subsequent supper, as lightly and delicately tinted as the great hall is grey with sculptured stone and garish with plumes and flashing armour. Throughout the poem, Keats plays two sets of impressions, of emotions, against each other. To the sound of the kettle-drums and metallic wind instruments, he opposes strings, the strings of a lute. Against the

> ". . argent revelry
> With plume, tiara, and all rich array,"

in the "thronged resort" of the great hall, he sets the "pallid moonshine" of the little still chamber, and the faint, beautiful colours thrown by the moonlit window. Never was riot more skilfully made to enhance silence. The world, and the soul; the life of outward seeming and inward fruition — no allegory, but a provable and proven fact.

But the *Eve of St. Agnes* is more than simply choral, it is antiphonal as well. For Keats, even in the heydey of his love experience, could not quite shake off his natural morbidness. Sinister, cynical, the mutter of death shudders always just beneath the surface of the tale. The lovers are happy, but beside them in the castle death sweeps upon its prey. Angela, the Beadsman, both die; the storm which protects the flight of the lovers howls round the castle suddenly become a tomb. It is the old story of the cruelty of nature.[1] For two who are happy, life demands the insatiable toll of death. It is no mere charming tale of love which Keats has written here, but a profoundly dramatic study of an unplumbed mystery. And it is on this note that Keats ends his poem.

[1] See Vol. I, p. 614.

St. Agnes' Eve is so familiar to all readers of poetry that any detailed description of it seems unnecessary. Nevertheless, there are a few little points which I wish to touch upon before we finish with it for the moment. One thing which should be carefully noted is the extraordinary way in which Keats was able to stay the movement of composition in order to correct his impulse. This is a very difficult thing to do, and yet, in this instance, much alteration, and several false starts, do not seem to have lessened the vigour, the *élan*, of his creative power in the slightest degree. A careful study of the two pages which I have reproduced will teach a student more of the marvellous way in which Keats was capable of holding to the thread of his unconscious creation, while at the same time consciously employing his critical faculty, than pages of explanation could do. All these variations and changes are reproduced by Buxton Forman,[1] but only by seeing them set down as Keats, in the hurry of composition, wrote them, can we really comprehend how, and why, they came to his mind.

The stanzas about the window are in many ways the finest in the poem. What if Keats did make the mistake of supposing that moonlight was strong enough to transmit the colour values of stained glass, does it matter a jot? Would any one wish these stanzas away because they are false to fact? The truth of art is not necessarily the truth of nature. Where a poet has made undeniable beauty, the critic does well who refrains from applying a rule of thumb.

Hunt has pointed out what appears a distinct weakness in Stanza XXV, where Keats says that Porphyro, looking at Madeline kneeling beneath the moonlit window, "grew faint" at the sight of her purity and loveliness. Hunt did not apparently know that this faintness was part and parcel of romance narrative, and that Keats was merely following a very old model in introducing it, but, leaving that aside,

[1] *The Complete Works of John Keats*, Edited by H. Buxton Forman. 5 vols. Gowans & Gray. Glasgow, 1900–1901.

what Hunt has to say on this subject is absolute truth, and should be taken into consideration by every reader:

> "He had, at the time of his writing this poem, the seeds of a mortal illness in him, and he, doubtless, wrote as he had felt, for he was also deeply in love; and extreme sensibility struggled in him with a great understanding."

That last clause might be taken as a motto for Keats's life.

Some years ago, there was a good deal of controversy in the newspapers as to the exact meaning of the line:

> "Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray."

What the various proponents of certain ingenious guesses said, is of no moment, for what Keats meant was assuredly known to Hunt, who explains the line in this way:

> "Clasp'd like a missal in a land of *Pagans*: that is to say, where Christian prayer-books must not be seen, and are, therefore, doubly cherished for the danger."

A single one of these newspaper epistles made a valuable suggestion, however. I quote a part of this letter:

> [1] "In seeking for the source of Keats's line in the 'Eve of St. Agnes,'
>
> 'Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray,'
>
> it may be well to ask whether the poet was not referring to a particular book. If a certain missal was much written and talked about in literary circles at this time, and if further it was a missal that had been used by Christians dwelling among the swart paynims (all of whom, as good Mohammedans, are pretty regular in their praying), there is a chance that this was the book that touched the poet's imagination and supplied the simile.
>
> As it happens, a copy of a missal which meets these conditions is now in the British Museum. It appears in the catalogue as '*Missale mixtum secundum regulam beati*

[1] From a letter by Professor Fred Newton Scott, University of Michigan, in the *New York Evening Post*, May 3, 1911.

I'sidori dictum Mozarabes . . . In regali civitate Toleti, 1500.'' The character of this missal, and its repute among book fanciers of Keats's time, are indicated by [certain] notes upon Lord Spencer's copy at Althorp, in T. F. Dibdin's '*Bibliotheca Spenceriana*' . . .

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That Keats actually saw either Dibdin's work or the missal itself there is, as far as I know, no proof, although it is not greatly straining probability to suppose that he saw both. Keats was in 1818–19 often at the house of Charles Wentworth Dilke, and it may be that he saw Dibdin's work in Dilke's library. I put the question some time ago in a letter to the late Sir Charles Dilke and received from him the following reply:

'Alas! I can't be sure, but I *think* I remember that this book was either at Belmont Castle (my great aunt's) or at Chichester. My great-grandfather's books, etc., were divided between my great uncle and his sister. I took from both libraries the books of my great-grandfather which had his book plate, but it is *not* among them.'"

It is so extremely likely that Keats should have seen Dibdin's *Bibliotheca Spenceriana* at one of these two houses, since it, like all Dibdin's books, was extremely popular with antiquarians, that I think Professor Scott's suggestion should not be left hidden in the files of a newspaper. When we consider the strangeness of Keats's simile, a quasi-clue of this sort is not to be slighted.

One more thing I wish my readers to notice. The gradual increasing and brightening of the colours as the love-scene continues, and the marvellous way in which these colours are managed. From the lights of the window, the symbol is continued through the banquet; but the window tints are stated, the hues of the fruits merely implied, it would have marred both effects to have duplicated the technique employed in them. The window colours and the colour of the table-cloth are "flat," given simply as themselves; the fruits are heightened by inference, they are full,

rounded, literary, if you like, and this change in the method of presentation sets them before us in the most excellent relief. From this moment, the room becomes warm with "perfume light." It is a beautiful conceit to have Porphyro think of these colours — the "lustrous salvers" gleaming in the moonlight, the "golden fringe" of the table-cover lying upon the carpet — as almost noisy in their effect, as though so much brilliance must wake Madeline.

It has been the fashion to condemn Keats's "carpets." Unnecessary preciosity! Carpets were known in Europe even before the assumed period of Keats's poem.[1] They seem to have been chiefly used for ladies' bowers, so that the presence of one in Madeline's chamber was entirely according to custom. As to those in the corridors, there is no absolute reason to condemn them, but it is quite possible to conclude that Keats here used the word "carpet" in its sense of "covering," and meant to imply woven rushes rather than woven stuffs.

The colour symbols having served their turn, Keats quenches them with the setting of St. Agnes' moon and the beginning of the elfin storm. Admirable indeed is Keats's manipulation of his various themes and meanings in the last five stanzas of the poem. Even at the very moment when we are told of Porphyro that "into her dream he melted," at that very instant come the words:

> "... meantime the frost-wind blows
> Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
> Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set."

The dream is over, reality has begun. Past death, misunderstanding, the imprisonment of personality, the lovers escape toward life together, not into a live-happy-ever-after kind of existence, but into the stress and storm of a future which at least they face side by side.

[1] *Encyclopædia Britannica.* Eleventh Edition.

Begun at Chichester, continued undoubtedly at Bedhampton, and gone on with, we know, after Keats's return to Hampstead, the *Eve of St. Agnes* did not receive its final revisions until the following Autumn at Winchester.

On Saturday, January twenty-third, Keats and Brown left old Mr. Dilke's and walked over to Bedhampton to the Snooks', a distance of ten miles; although they reached the Snooks' house by three, Brown records that they found dinner already over. In the same paragraph in which he mentions this disappointing fact, Brown tells Mrs. Dilke that "Keats is much better, owing to a strict forbearance from a third glass of wine." The reference to the wine is a joke, yet it seems to have been a fact that Keats's sore throat was a little better during the first days of his stay away from home. But the improvement was short-lived. On his return to Hampstead, he wrote his sister: "At Bedhampton I was unwell and did not go out of the Garden Gate but twice or thrice during the fortnight I was there." A singular excursion provided by his hosts for Monday, the twenty-fifth, the second day after his arrival, was a distinct imprudence for Keats, undertaken, as it was, in the rain. A famous Jew converter, the Rev. Mr. Lewis Way, who lived at Stanstead House near Racton in Sussex, had built a chapel in his park, and the chapel was to be consecrated on that day with the Bishops of Gloucester and St. Davids officiating. Why such an occasion should have been expected to interest Keats, is a query. To be sure, Mr. Way bore the remarkable reputation of having visited all the chief rabbis from Rotterdam to Moscow in his efforts at proselytizing. It had taken him nearly a year to accomplish this feat, and he was become a distinct celebrity in local and church circles thereby. To the consecration, in duty bound, Keats went, "Brown, I, and John Snook the boy . . . in a chaise behind a leaden horse. Brown drove, but the horse did not mind him." We can imagine the soggy roads, the trio crushed beneath the pulled-over hood of the

chaise, the everlasting slow plod of the horse, the smell of damp leather and steaming horseflesh, the occasional low branch catching the chaise top and showering a sudden volley of little drops inside. It was a depressing drive, and to Keats a depressing occasion. It aroused all his spleen toward established religious organizations. This sort of thing was the negation of religion to him, it irritated him beyond measure and he let himself go about it in a letter to George written soon after he got back to town:

> "The consecration was — not amusing. There were numbers of carriages — and his house crammed with clergy. They sanctified the chapel, and it being a wet day, consecrated the burial-ground through the vestry window. I begin to hate parsons; they did not make me love them that day, when I saw them in their proper colours. A parson is a Lamb in a drawing-room, and a Lion in a vestry. The notions of Society will not permit a parson to give way to his temper in any shape — so he festers in himself — his features get a peculiar, diabolical, self-sufficient, iron stupid expression. He is continually acting — his mind is against every man, and every man's mind is against him. He is an hypocrite to the Believer and a coward to the unbeliever. He must be either a knave or an idiot — and there is no man so much to be pitied as an idiot parson. The soldier who is cheated into an Esprit de Corps by a red coat, a band, and colours, for the purpose of nothing, is not half so pitiable as the parson who is led by the nose by the bench of bishops and is smothered in absurdities — a poor necessary subaltern of the Church."

Keats's opinion of the clergy had recently received a severe set-back from his learning of the sudden and unexpected engagement of his friend Bailey to Miss Hamilton Gleig, the daughter of Bishop Gleig, and the sister of his intimate friend. I have spoken of this event before;[1] we are concerned with it now merely as it affected Keats. The unfortunate character of this affair was due simply to the fact

[1] See Vol. I, pp. 478–479.

that Bailey had gone to Scotland the declared, although not the accepted, suitor of Marianne Reynolds. Looking at the matter from this distance of time, it seems a little fantastic to hold a man bound to a woman who had definitely refused him. But middle-class etiquette in such matters was very severe in the England of the early nineteenth century. Keats was profoundly shocked, and his opinion seems to have been duplicated by all the Reynolds circle. By Bailey's behaviour, Keats tells George,

> "all his connections in town have been annulled — both male and female. I do not now remember clearly the facts. These however I know — He showed his correspondence with Marian to Gleig — returned all her Letters and asked for his own — he also wrote very abrupt Letters to Mrs. Reynolds... No doubt his conduct has been very bad. The great thing to be considered is — whether it is want of delicacy and principle or want of knowledge and polite experience. And again weakness — yes, that is it; and the want of a Wife — yes, that is it... Mariane's obstinacy is some excuse — but his so quickly taking to Miss Gleig can have no excuse — except that of a Ploughman who wants a wife. The thing which sways me more against him than anything else is Rice's conduct on the occasion; Rice would not make an immature resolve; he was ardent in his friendship for Bailey, he examined the whole for and against minutely; and he has abandoned Bailey entirely. All this I am not supposed by the Reynoldses to have any idea of."

These remarks about Bailey led Keats to a beautiful and wise observation, one of those observations which show us the very heart and core of his continual reflections:

> "A Man's life of any worth is a continual allegory, and very few eyes can see the Mystery of his life — a life like the scriptures, figurative — which such people can no more make out than they can the Hebrew Bible. Lord Byron cuts a figure but he is not figurative — Shakespeare led a life of Allegory: his works are the comments on it."

Bailey seems to have kept all Keats's letters, and that he should have received none on the occasion of Tom's death certainly looks as though Keats knew this long story some time earlier than he wrote it to George, in February. Whenever he found it out, it put a succinct end to any farther real friendship between them. Keats does not seem to have mentioned the subject to Bailey, merely to have dropped Bailey quietly and unobtrusively. One more letter to Bailey we have, written in the following August, but it reads more like an attempt to appear easy than anything else, as though Keats thought it wise to keep up the semblance of a relation, for, after all, the quarrel was none of his. But the life of their friendship was dead, and no other letters passed between them.

The long, wet drive to and from Stanstead brought back Keats's sore throat, and he was housed for practically the whole rest of his visit; but he liked the Snooks and seems to have enjoyed talking to them.

If his "fortnight" is to be taken as exact, Keats returned to Wentworth Place on February sixth. He came back in miserable health, and much tormented by a fresh evidence of Abbey's desire to separate him still farther from his sister. Abbey now expressed his unwillingness to allow the brother and sister to correspond. This hurt Keats very much, as did Abbey's manner on one or two occasions when he went to see him; finally Keats took the bull by the horns and wrote Abbey a letter which had some effect in inducing him to grant the brother and sister a little more freedom together.

Keats's state of mind on his return to Hampstead seems to have been a decidedly complicated one, and only a tithe of his perplexities appears in his letters. His scrupulous care to keep everything connected with Fanny Brawne and his real relation to her from his brother's knowledge, leaves his narration of events — psychological events, at any rate — singularly incomplete. To supplement it, we have

the evidence of the poems he wrote during the Spring, and a few annotations in a book he happened to be reading at the time. Buxton Forman imagines that Keats announced his engagement to his brother and sister-in-law in a letter which has been lost; I see no reason for any such supposition. On the contrary, I think everything we can judge by points to the fact of Keats having admitted an engagement only after seeing George on the latter's return to England in the following year, when it would be almost impossible to conceal it any longer. What George and Georgiana may have guessed from the letters of others of the circle is another thing. I feel very sure that Keats took as few people as possible into his confidence at any time, and then only when the circumstances had become too patent to be ignored.

Whatever Keats did, or did not, say to his friends and his brother and sister-in-law, it is obvious that Fanny Brawne, and the overwhelming love for her in which he found himself plunged, filled him with turmoil and all the alternations of extreme joy and fearful distrust which we should expect. With our intimate knowledge of his temperament, we need not be astonished to find him turning even his happiness into an exquisite self-torture. For his moments of sheer felicity — and we may be certain that he had such moments to excess — there were others in which his imagination conjured up a thousand puerile infidelities and laid them at Fanny Brawne's door to the consequent discomfort of both. Let us admit, once and for all, that Keats must have been a very uneasy lover. It would be small wonder if Fanny Brawne occasionally asked herself whether this exacting and excitable young man could make any woman really happy, yet that seems to have been a question which, in sober earnest, she never asked. She made her choice and abided by it, all honour to her for so doing.

As a matter of fact, the outlook from a commonsense

standpoint was not at all assuring. Keats had no idea that he was already a victim of consumption, but he did know that he was strangely liable to sore throats, and was often on the sick list for days at a time. On his return to Wentworth Place, he took himself firmly in hand and shut himself up in the house. "Since I came back," he wrote to his sister, "I have been taking care of myself — I have been obliged to do so, and am now in hopes that by this care I shall get rid of a sore throat which has haunted me at intervals nearly a twelvemonth." A long engagement is one thing; an engagement which can count on no change in circumstances such as will make marriage possible, is another. Mrs. Brawne had a little money, but scarcely enough for her to contemplate the financing of a second household; Keats had made large inroads into his principal and the chancery suit left his hopes for the future extremely problematical. He had no settled means of support, and was determined at all costs to write poetry come what would. There was enough in all this to cause anxiety.

At first, after he got home, the writing fit continued. In a journal letter to George, begun on February fourteenth,[1] he says: "We — Brown and I — sit opposite one another all day authorizing." He seems to have been engaged in tinkering on the *Eve of St. Agnes*, but he also began the *Eve of St. Mark*. Woodhouse, who states[2] that he copied the poem from Keats's manuscript, adds that it was written "13/17 Feb., 1819." St. Mark's Eve falls on April twenty-fourth, so that the day itself counted for nothing in Keats's choice of subject. Probably it grew out of the already partly fin-

[1] The letter is dated "Sunday Morn, Feby. 24th 1819," but this is clearly an error made either by Keats himself or some later copyist. The correct date is undoubtedly February 14th, since that was a Sunday. A continuation of the letter is dated "Friday Feby 18" which is probably right as to the day of the week, although the day of the month should have been given as the nineteenth. See Appendix D.

[2] Woodhouse Commonplace Book (*Poems II*). Crewe Collection.

ished *Eve of St. Agnes.* Notwithstanding that he had one superb poem nearly done, and another, which promised to be as good, fairly on the stocks, Keats found himself unable to go on. The excitements and anxieties which beset him proved too harassing to leave him in the proper frame of mind for writing poetry. He tells George:

> [1]"In my next packet, as this one is by the way, I shall send you my Pot of Basil, St. Agnes' eve, and if I should have finished it, a little thing called the eve of St. Mark. You see what fine Mother Radcliffe names I have — it is not my fault — I did not search for them. I have not gone on with Hyperion, for to tell the truth I have not been in great cue for writing lately — I must wait for the spring to rouse me up a little."

As the *Eve of St. Mark*, although begun in February, was so soon abandoned and not taken up again until September, I shall wait to consider it until the Winchester period.

What principally troubled Keats was undoubtedly his adjustment to Fanny Brawne. With Keats, love and jealousy were inseparable. We can guess at the state of things by a rather pathetic little remark in a letter to his sister Fanny. Speaking of the Abbey's garden at Walthamstow, he says:

> "I should like to take possession of those Grassplots for a Month or so; and send Mrs. A. to Town to count coffee berries instead of currant Bunches, for I want you to teach me a few common dancing steps — and I would buy a Watch box to practise them in by myself."

Keats, who did not dance, was at an obvious disadvantage at a dancing-party, and to be at a disadvantage where Fanny Brawne was concerned must have galled him terribly. There is no record of his having mastered his "dancing steps," but there is a record of the way conditions were worrying him, and this record is from a most unex-

[1] Corrected from original letter.

pected source — a copy of *Palmerin of England*.[1] We have Hunt's authority for the fact that Keats was reading *Palmerin* at this time. The book had been lent him by Taylor and he liked it so much that he never returned it, it was found among his books after he died and given back to its rightful owner by Brown. Now in this book there are a number of passages underscored by Keats, and some of these underscorings can hardly have been made for any purpose other than the personal application which he found in the passages so marked. These particular annotations are all in the third and fourth volumes of the work, the first of them can certainly not have been noticed for its excellence as poetry. It is:

> "Some men in love commend their happiness,
> their quiet, sweet, and delicate delight;
> And I can boast of fortune's forwardness,
> her extreme rigour, and severe despight.
> But for the sweetness other men have felt,
> I came too late, my part was elsewhere dealt."

The next passage scored is: "it is the nature of women to desire to see novelties, and go pilgrimages." Again, Keats marks a passage where a knight overhears another boasting that he is master of his affections, which words seemed to the listener "to come from one who was at liberty, and to whom love could do neither good nor evil. But he himself desired not to live in such liberty." The following is partly double scored; "I do not hold her to be of such poor understanding as that for a man *so free as you* she should be willing to reject a *will so devoted as mine*." That Keats found an exact analogy to his own case in these next lines, is evident: "And as men whose hearts have long been free, when they devote them at last are more devoted than such as have been used to such devotement, so it was with this knight." Here, also, it must have been himself of whom he

[1] Owned by Mr. Lucius Wilmerding of New York.

was thinking when he drew his pencil under the last half of this sentence: "He had no other food than his *own imaginations, which would sooner destroy than support him.*" Of vanity in women, he scores this: "so strong is this passion in them that nothing can equal it."

Have we not, in these marked passages of *Palmerin*, as clear an account of Keats's mental state during February and March as we need to understand why he could not write, why he saw so little of his friends, why so many old interests had lost their savour?

The evidence of the change in his daily habits may be seen by a few casual remarks in the beginning of his letter to George. For instance:

> "I see very little now, and very few persons, being almost tired of men and things. Brown and Dilke are very kind and considerate towards me. The Miss R's have been stopping next door lately, but are very dull. Miss Brawne and I have every now and then a chat and a tiff . . . The literary world I know nothing about . . . Yesterday I went to town for the first time for these three weeks. I met people from all parts and of all sorts . . . I see very little of Reynolds. Hunt, I hear is going on very badly — I mean in money matters. I shall not be surprised to hear of the worst. Haydon too, in consequence of his eyes, is out at elbows. I live as prudently as it is possible for me to do. I have not seen Haslam lately. I have not seen Richards for this half year, Rice for three months, or Charles Cowden Clarke for God knows when."

Keats gives a homely little thumbnail sketch of suburban gossip in the London stage. He tells the story half-humorously, half-ruefully, and since the anecdote serves to throw another sidelight on the main picture, I think it worth repeating as Keats told it:

> "Mr. Lewis went a few mornings ago to town with Mrs. Brawne. They talked about me, and I heard that Mr. L. said a thing that I am not at all contented with. Says he,

'O, he is quite the little poet.' Now this is abominable. You might as well say that Buonaparte is quite the little soldier. You see what it is to be under six foot and not a lord."

In spite of the general dislocation of his life at the moment, Keats was manfully trying to keep his head to the wind. His second instalment of the long letter to George contains the following:

"I have not said in any Letter a word about my own affairs — in a word I am in no despair about them — my poem has not at all succeeded; in the course of a year or so I think I shall try the public again — in a selfish point of view I should suffer my pride and my contempt of public opinion to hold me silent — but for yours and Fanny's sake I will pluck up a spirit and try again. I have no doubt of success in a course of years if I persevere — but it must be patience — for the Reviews have enervated and made indolent men's minds — few think for themselves. These Reviews too are getting more and more powerful, especially the Quarterly — they are like a superstition which the more it prostrates the Crowd and the longer it continues the more powerful it becomes just in proportion to their increasing weakness. I was in hopes that when people saw, as they must do now, all the trickery and iniquity of these Plagues they would scout them, but no, they are like the spectators at the Westminister cock-pit — they like the battle — and do not care who wins or loses."

Keats's attitude was both plucky and shrewd, and he was fortunate in having publishers who backed him up at every point. Taylor & Hessey's loyalty, kept at the boiling point by Woodhouse's enthusiasm, is one of the bright spots in Keats's life. A long undated letter from Woodhouse, apparently to his cousin, Miss Frogley, and evidently written shortly after the episode of Miss Porter and *Endymion*, shows Woodhouse's loyalty and wisdom in such a clear light, reveals indeed so much of the fine feeling and

understanding which certain of Keats's admirers had for his work that, notwithstanding its length, I shall give some parts of it here.

[1] "MY DEAR MARY.

I returned from Hounslow late last night . . . I brought Endymion back, thinking you might like to have it in Town whilst with your friends.

You were so flattering as to say the other day, you wished I had been in a company where you were, to defend Keats. — In all places, and at all times, and before all persons, I would express and so far as I am able, support, my high opinion of his poetical merits — such a genius, I verily believe, has not appeared since Shakespeare and Milton: and I may assert without fear of contradiction from any one competent to Judge, that if his Endymion be compared with Shakespeare's earliest work (his Venus and Adonis) written about the same age, Keats's poem will be found to contain more beauties, more poetry (and that of a higher order) less conceit and bad taste and in a word much more promise of excellence than are to be found in Shakespeare's work. This is a deliberate opinion, nor is it merely my own . . .

But in our common conversation upon his merits, we should always bear in mind that his fame may be more hurt by indiscriminate praise than by wholesale censure. I would at once admit that he has great faults — enough indeed to sink another writer. But they are more than counterbalanced by his beauties: and this is the proper mode of appreciating an original genius. His faults will wear away — his fire will be chastened — and then eyes will do homage to his brilliancy. But genius is wayward, trembling, easily daunted. And shall we not excuse the errors, the luxuriancy of youth? Are we to expect that poets are to be given to the world, as our first parents were, in a state of maturity? Are they to have no season of childhood? are they to have no room to try their wings be-

[1] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Library. This original draft is badly torn. The version in the text has been corrected from a copy of the original letter published by Sir Sidney Colvin in the *Times Literary Supplement*, April 16, 1914.

fore the steadiness and strength of their flight are to be finally judged of?... Had I any literary reputation I would stake it on the result. You know the side I should espouse. As it is, — I can only prophesy. And now, while Keats is unknown, unheeded, despised of one of our arch-critics, neglected by the rest — in the teeth of the world, and in the face of 'these curious days,' I express my conviction, that Keats, during his life (if it please God to spare him to the usual age of man, and the critics not to drive him from the free air of the Poetic heaven before his Wings are fully fledged) will rank on a level with the best of the last or of the present generation: and after his death will take his place at their head. But, while I think thus, I would make persons respect my judgement by the discrimination of my praise, and by the freedom of my censure where his writings are open to it. These are the Elements of true criticism. It is easy, like Momus, to find fault with the clattering of the slipper worn by the Goddess of beauty; but 'the serious Gods' found better employment in admiration of her unapproachable loveliness. A Poet ought to write for Posterity. But a critic should do so, too. Those of our times write for the day, or rather the hour. Their thoughts and Judgements are fashionable garbs, such as they imagine a skew-wise world would like to array itself in at second hand... Adieu, my dear Mary...

I am as ever yours,

RICHARD WOODHOUSE."

That letter makes one forgive Woodhouse's occasional ineptitudes. His heart was always in the right place, and if he ever guessed that his meticulous inquiries into the meaning and method of Keats's work sometimes brought on himself a little bored spoofing, he had the wit and the kindness to ignore the fact. A few months later, we find Keats asking Dilke if he knows Woodhouse, and explaining: "He is a Friend of Taylor's at whom Brown has taken one of his funny odd dislikes. I'm sure he's wrong, because Woodhouse likes my Poetry — conclusive." We have already seen Woodhouse scheming to enlarge Keats's hori-

zon, to lift him out of his rut. Now suddenly either he or Taylor conceived the idea that it would do Keats good to stay with Taylor for a few days, and take in a theatre or two. Taylor was now living at 93 New Bond Street, and Keats was persuaded to pass "two or three days" with him during the last week of February, getting back to Hampstead on Friday, February twenty-sixth.

Sir Sidney Colvin believes that the *Bright Star* sonnet was written on this visit. I freely admit that it may have been, but I am inclined, for reasons which I shall give presently, to attribute it to mid-April. Sir Sidney has recently discovered a transcript of the sonnet made by Brown and dated "1819." There was a snow flurry on the afternoon of Wednesday, February twenty-fourth, and another on the following morning, and for this reason — since Keats speaks of

> ". . . the new soft fallen mask
> Of snow"

in the poem — Sir Sidney attributes it to this time. It is dangerous reasoning to date a poem by its images. A poet may be writing under the circumstances which he depicts in his poem, or, quite as possibly, the exact opposite may be true. Many things have to be taken into consideration when a question of date is involved. Being fairly certain that mid-April is the more likely moment for the poem to have been written, I shall not discuss it until we arrive at Keats's doings for April. Then my readers can weigh my arguments against Sir Sidney's and draw their own conclusions.

At the beginning of March, we find Keats writing to Haydon:

> "You must be wondering where I am and what I am about! I am mostly at Hampstead and about nothing; being in a sort of qui bono temper, not exactly on the road to an epic poem. Nor must you think I have forgotten you.

No, I have about every three days been to Abbey's and to the Law[y]ers."

We know for what purpose these visits were made, as Haydon's business had not yet been settled. Keats was in a distinctly disgusted mood when he wrote this letter, and he takes no pains to hide his spleen. "What a set of little people we live amongst!" he exclaims, and goes on:

> "Conversation is not a thirst after knowledge, but an endeavour at effect.
>
> In this respect two most opposite men, Wordsworth and Hunt, are the same. A friend of mine observed the other day that if Lord Bacon were to make any remark in a party of the present day, the conversation would stop on the sudden. I am convinced of this, and from this I have come to this resolution — never to write for the sake of writing or making a poem, but from running over with any little knowledge or experience which many years of reflection may perhaps give me; otherwise I will be dumb . . .
>
> With respect to my livelihood, I will not write for it, — for I will not run with that most vulgar of all crowds, the literary. Such things I ratify by looking upon myself, and trying myself by lifting mental weights, as it were. I am three and twenty, with little knowledge and middling intellect. It is true that in the height of enthusiasm I have been cheated into some fine passages; but that is not the thing."

It is not the thing, most assuredly; and Keats owes it to his excellent critical faculty to have discovered this important artistic truth so early. But if he were not going to write for his living, what was he going to do for it, since his interviews with Abbey had shown him pretty clearly that what money he had left would keep him no long time unless he found some way of augmenting it? Looking his prospects fairly in the face, he even considered the advisability of going to Edinburgh and studying for a physician's certificate, but, he tells George, "I am afraid I should not

take kindly to it; I am sure I could not take fees — and yet I should like to do so; it's not worse than writing poems, and hanging them up to be fly-blown on the Review shambles."

It may seem odd that Keats, who had an apothecary's diploma, never appears to have considered practising his profession. But there were several reasons which may well have made this the last thing that he wanted to do. It was not so long since Abbey had wished him to buy a practice as surgeon and apothecary in one of the London suburbs; but two years is two years, and his small capital could no longer provide him with means for this. If he started in practice, it must be as some one's assistant, and he knew himself well enough to realize that that would never work. Also, the people with whom he was now living were socially rather above an apothecary's standard. Keats hated the idea of a shop, and physicians did not have shops. Where the money for his tuition in Edinburgh was to come from does not seem to have entered into his calculations. The fact is, he did not want to be a physician, he did not want to do anything but write poetry, and in the end he let the whole thing slide, optimistically persuading himself that things could not be as bad as Abbey said. We must not blame him too much for this inertia, nor shall we, if we keep firmly in mind two things: one, his health; the other, that he had an irresistible bent in one direction, a bent so strong that nothing on earth could turn him from it. If ever a man was born to write poetry, Keats was that man. A little poet, like Reynolds, could abandon literature for the law when it became a question of marrying or not; a great poet, like Keats, must, by the very necessity of his being, function as nature intended, even his love, profound and permeating though it were, could not stand against the natural impulse of his whole nature. Fanny Brawne seems to have understood this, and there is no evidence that she ever urged him to take up a practical profession,

as Miss Drew urged Reynolds. This attitude of Fanny Brawne's is one of the noblest things we know about her.

That Keats was utterly worn out with his sensations at this time, it takes no great amount of perspicacity to see. We must not forget that the agony of the Autumn was bound to take its toll sooner or later. No man could run the gamut of so many emotions as Keats had endured during the last six months without having it tell on his energies. This has been so little understood that it has been the habit of critics and biographers to attribute his inability to write from mid-February to mid-March to the baleful influence of Fanny Brawne, instead of understanding at once that it was simply imperative for him to lie fallow and store up what health and vitality he had until his reservoir of creative force was once more full enough to draw upon.

A little extra strain was sufficient to throw him into a state of numbness, a sort of weary trance in which, being himself, his imagination visited him with dreams, but dreams cool, temperate, pricking him to no answering emotion. This is the meaning of a passage in the letter to George which has been almost universally misconstrued. It was written on Friday, the nineteenth of March:

> "This morning I am in a sort of temper, indolent and supremely careless — I long after a stanza or two of Thompson's Castle of Indolence — my passions are all asleep, from my having slumbered till nearly eleven, and weakened the animal fibre all over me, to a delightful sensation, about three degrees on this side of faintness. If I had teeth of pearl and the breath of lilies I should call it languor, but as I am I must call it laziness. In this state of effeminacy the fibres of the brain are relaxed in common with the rest of the body, and to such a happy degree that pleasure has no show of enticement and pain no unbearable power. Neither Poetry, nor Ambition, nor Love have any alertness of countenance as they pass by me; they seem rather like figures on a Greek vase — a Man and two

> women whom no one but myself could distinguish in their disguisement."

At the words "as I am," Keats put an asterisk, and at the bottom of the page wrote "Especially as I have a black eye." And thereby hangs a tale.

It has hitherto been supposed that this black eye refers to the fight with the butcher who was tormenting the kitten.[1] But a perfectly fresh light has been thrown upon the matter by the discovery of what seems to have been intended as a part of this letter. It has come into my possession too late to permit of its being incorporated in the text, but will be found elsewhere.[2] Through it, we learn that the immediate cause of the black eye was a cricket ball. Keats seems to have been trying to dispel his fatigue by some strenuous and unwonted exercise, and the blow from the ball was a serious matter to his overtaxed strength. Keats was neither lazy nor sybaritic in sleeping until eleven and waking in the listless mood he describes. He was utterly played out. We must remember that he was not only entirely out of training, he was really a sick man. Gloriously and stubbornly as his magnificent constitution refused to be downed by the tuberculosis which was slowly, but steadily, tightening its hold, nevertheless he was in no condition to stand a shock of any kind. Only a short month before, he had shrunk from walking up the hill to call on Mr. Lewis. It was extremely foolish to attempt even the mildest and most short-handed cricket, and the effort told. Instead of reading into his description of this morning's relaxation a sign of sensuous indulgence, we should realize that in it we have a clear evidence of an indomitable will triumphing over a serious state of debility and disease. If only Keats's friends had understood, if only the sheer grit with which he kept himself going could have met with a little sensible medical help, if only — for this is what it amounts to — Keats had

[1] See Vol. I, p. 257. [2] See Appendix D.

lived a century later than he did. But these are dreams. Keats lived, and alas! died, a victim of his age, and in some sense, too, a victim of his own courage and innate vitality.

Keats's vitality, that spark in him which made him the vivid creature he was, deceived his friends as to his actual situation until his first hæmorrhage forced it unescapably upon them. Even after that, the doctors refused to take alarm as they should have done. At this period, a few days after the episode of the cricket ball, Clarke went out to Wentworth Place to see him, on which occasion Keats read to him the *Eve of St. Agnes*. Clarke found him "in fine health and spirits," [1] which only proves how little a casual visitor could tell his real condition when, for any reason, his mind was actively engaged and happy. Immediately after this, Clarke left London to go and live with his father, now settled at Ramsgate, and the two friends never met again.

I do not wish to give the impression that Keats's illness was a steady progression which his friends could see advancing from day to day. Taken by terms of months, undoubtedly an observant onlooker could have noticed a steady decline; but there were periods of apparent resilience when for weeks at a time Keats gave an impression of recovered health, and his moods of mental depression were made responsible, in his friends' ignorant opinion, for much more of his evident low spirits than they could properly bear. Difficult as his life was during the remainder of the year, it is time that students realized how great a part of his despondence was due solely to disease. The wonder is that both physically and mentally he held his own so long.

Meanwhile we see him, not writing indeed as yet, but forcing himself back into his usual interests. He quotes at great length Hazlitt's *Letter to William Gifford* for George's benefit. He sends a volume of Goldsmith to Fanny, and

[1] See Appendix D.

writes to her about Tassie's gems.[1] On March thirteenth, he tells her, charmingly:

> "I must confess even now a partiality for a handsome Globe of gold-fish — then I would have it hold 10 pails of water and be fed continually fresh through a cool pipe with another pipe to let through the floor — well ventilated they would preserve all their beautiful silver and Crimson. Then I would put it before a handsome painted window and shade it all round with myrtles and Japonicas. I should like the window to open onto the Lake of Geneva — and there I'd sit and read all day like the picture of somebody reading. The weather now and then begins to feel like spring; and therefore I have begun my walks on the heath again."

As these walks seem to have been principally taken with Fanny Brawne, the mere mention of them is significant.

Toward the end of March (Buxton Forman thinks that Keats's letter, which is simply dated, "Monday — aft," was written on the twenty-ninth) Severn proposed that he put into the Royal Academy exhibition, along with his picture of *Hermia and Helena*, a miniature which he had painted of Keats. We have no exact knowledge of when this miniature was done, since Sharp,[2] in attributing it to the Winter of 1819, is clearly in error, as he says that the miniature was much liked by Keats's brothers, and by 1819 one of his brothers was dead, and the other in America. The most likely time for it to have been painted was, I think, the Winter of 1818, although it may have been done even earlier. Severn painted all three of the Keats brothers, and it is not improbable that he did them all about the same time, during 1817 and the early part of 1818.

Keats's reply to Severn's suggestion shows admirable good sense and modesty. In the first instance, he warns Severn that a miniature is lost in a great exhibition; in the

[1] See Vol. I, p. 490.

[2] *Life and Letters of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp.

second, he tells Severn plainly that to exhibit it may hurt them both, considering their ages and lack of fame, and that people would be apt to "laugh at the puff of the one and the vanity of the other." However, in the end he left Severn a free hand, and Severn, nothing daunted, added the miniature to his large picture as his contribution for the year. The two paintings were hung at the Royal Academy exhibition for 1819; the *Hermia and Helena* appearing in the catalogue as Number 267, and the miniature as Number 940.

In these long journal letters to George, Keats frequently breaks off and begins again without making any change of date. Was it on the weary Friday that he continued his letter with certain very interesting reflections, or does this contribution mean a lapse of twenty-four hours or more? Arguments in favour of either supposition could easily be found, but because of the last sentence of this section of the letter, I am inclined to believe that the latter half of it was written a day later than the former. There is a slight change of mood at this point, the not unpleasant languor has given place to a more energetic feeling; once more he has begun to think and reason. His new, although related, train of thought, is induced by the fact that he has just heard from Haslam that his father is dying. Keats says:

> "This is the world — thus we cannot expect to give away many hours to pleasure. Circumstances are like Clouds continually gathering and bursting. While we are laughing, the seed of some trouble is put into the wide arable land of events — while we are laughing it sprouts, it grows, and suddenly bears a poison fruit which we must pluck. Even so we have leisure to reason on the misfortunes of our friends; our own touch us too nearly for words. Very few men have ever arrived at a complete disinterestedness of Mind: very few have been influenced by a pure desire of the benefit of others, — in the greater part of the Benefactors of Humanity some meretricious motive

has sullied their greatness — some melodramatic scenery has fascinated them. From the manner in which I feel Haslam's misfortune I perceive how far I am from any humble standard of disinterestedness."

Keats was a man who dared look into himself, and few men have sought to do this so honestly. The realization of the imperfection of his sympathy leads him on to the thought of the universe of creatures all pursuing their own ends, and man among them equally intent upon his. From a rather confused train of reasoning, which seems intended to prove a thesis at which he never quite arrives, he suddenly breaks off to state the exact opposite of his original premise, but this statement is, in itself, a most important thing, particularly when we remember his constantly growing repugnance to the formulæ of religious teaching. Here is what he says:

"I have no doubt that thousands of people never heard of have had hearts completely disinterested: I can remember but two — Socrates and Jesus — Their histories evince it. What I heard a little time ago, Taylor observe with respect to Socrates, may be said of Jesus — That he was so great a man that though he transmitted no writing of his own to posterity, we have his Mind and his sayings and his greatness handed to us by others. It is to be lamented that the history of the latter was written and revised by Men interested in the pious frauds of Religion. Yet through all this I see his splendour."

Nothing could explain Keats's attitude toward the fundamental nobility of spiritual apprehensions better than that passage; nor his full realization of his own inability to plumb his glimmering perceptions to an ultimate end than this one which immediately follows:

"Even here, though I myself am pursuing the same instinctive course as the veriest human animal you can think of, I am, however young, writing at random, strain-

> ing at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness, without knowing the bearing of any one assertion, of any one opinion."

There is more here that I should like to quote, but space forbids. The passage ends with a bit of self-revelation and a profound truth:

> "Do you not think that I strive — to know myself? Give me this credit . . . Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced — even a Proverb is no proverb to you till your Life has illustrated it."

This does not seem to be the mood of Friday morning. No, I take it to be the mood of Saturday. But here, suddenly, Keats copies a poem. Only the week before, he had remarked to George:

> "I know not why Poetry and I have been so distant lately — I must make some advances soon or she will cut me entirely."

Now a poem has come, but under what circumstances? I think the slow recovery from the languid mood was responsible. For this sonnet distinctly circles round the vision of his waking dream, but with an ardour which the dream itself lacked. As his languor lessened, his pain returned, bringing with it a regret which gave to the perpetual numbness of death a strange desirability. Yet, lest George should read a greater distress into the poem than he purposes to convey, he prefaces it with an explanation. For George, knowing him to be without his erstwhile confidants, Tom and himself, will assuredly picture him as stifling his feelings within himself. He essays to reassure him, and the reassurance itself harks back to his previous meditations, which in turn seem to have sprung from the sonnet:

> "I am ever afraid that your anxiety for me will lead you

to fear for the violence of my temperament continually smothered down: for that reason I did not intend to have sent you the following sonnet — but look over the two last pages and ask yourselves whether I have not that in me which will bear the buffets of the world. It will be the best comment on my sonnet; it will show that it was written with no Agony but that of ignorance; with no thirst of anything but Knowledge when pushed to the point though the first steps to it were through my human passions — they went away and I wrote with my Mind — and perhaps I must confess a little bit of my heart."

Since this sonnet is not particularly well known, and is so pertinent to his mental state — his effort to fit the experience of love into some sort of pattern with his continual blind belief in a beauty and truth to which everything in his nature clung, together with the weariness which this constant effort caused him — I will quote it here.

"Why did I laugh to-night? No voice will tell:
No God, no Demon of severe response
Deigns to reply from heaven or from Hell. —
Then to my human heart I turn at once —
Heart! thou and I are here sad and alone;
Say, wherefore did I laugh? O mortal pain!
O Darkness! Darkness! ever must I moan
To question Heaven and Hell and Heart in vain!
Why did I laugh? I know this being's lease
My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads:
Yet would I on this very midnight cease
And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds.
Verse, Fame and Beauty are intense indeed
But Death intenser — Death is Life's high meed." [1]

Having copied the poem, he continues:

[1] There are two slight differences in this letter version of the sonnet to that given by Lord Houghton in his 1848 edition. I have kept to the letter version in one instance, but adopted Lord Houghton's version in the other. Again, Lord Houghton's capitalization and punctuation differ from the letter holograph, and again I have, with one exception, followed Keats.

"I went to bed and enjoyed uninterrupted sleep. Sane I went to bed and sane I arose."

I think we may believe every word that he says in this connection, and exactly as he says it. Although his mind had partially recovered from the inertia of the morning, he had still too little energy to suffer as was his wont. He could recollect the agony of his perpetual questioning, but was too tired to be wrung afresh. A subtle distinction of sensations, yet one of absolute fact; the respite of fatigue, to which he gladly surrendered and so fell asleep.

From this point, there occurs the gap of a month in his correspondence, broken only by the letter about the miniature to Severn. I will fill it by putting, quite out of order, a little sketch, which can by no means be omitted, but which I have found it impossible to give in its proper place. It belongs to the second week of March. Keats has been copying a long passage from Hazlitt's *Letter to William Gifford.* He breaks off to give this intimate picture of himself, an enchanting little vignette which must have warmed George's and Georgiana's hearts as it warms ours. It is this sort of thing which makes Keats one of the best letter writers that ever lived.

"... there is another extract or two — one especially which I will copy tomorrow — for the candles are burnt down and I am using the wax taper — which has a long snuff on it — the fire is at its last click — I am sitting with my back to it with one foot rather askew upon the rug and the other with the heel a little elevated from the carpet — I am writing this on the Maid's tragedy which I have read since tea with Great pleasure. Besides this volume of Beaumont and Fletcher — there are on the table two volumes of Chaucer and a new work of Tom Moore's called 'Tom Cribb's Memorial to Congress' — nothing in it. These are trifles but I require nothing so much of you but that you will give me a like description of yourselves, however it may be when you are writing to me. Could I

> see the same thing done of any great Man long since dead it would be a great delight: As to know in what position Shakespeare sat when he began 'To be or not to be' — such things become interesting from distance of time or place. I hope you are both now in that sweet sleep which no two beings deserve more than you do — I must fancy you so — and please myself in the fancy of speaking a prayer and a blessing over you and your lives — God bless you — I whisper good night in your ears and you will dream of me."

During the month in which Keats wrote so few letters, occurred an alteration in the domestic life of the double house, Wentworth Place. The Dilkes had one boy, who was the apple of his father's eye; indeed, so wrapped up in him was he, that his preoccupation rather bored his friends. Charley Dilke's education was a matter of the deepest concern to his doting father, and now that Charley had reached the age when a dame school would no longer serve, Dilke was busy canvassing all the pros and cons of various institutions. Finally Westminster School was chosen, and as Charley was to be a day boy, the Dilkes determined to let their half of Wentworth Place and move to Westminster. The flitting took place on April third. Although the departure of the Dilkes was in many ways a regret to Keats, it had its agreeable side, for the tenants who took their house were none other than the Brawne family. The increased opportunities for meeting, when members of the two families could not step into the garden without the chance of encountering one another, and Keats, looking out of his front parlour window, might at any moment see Fanny Brawne going out or coming in, on her way to town, or to walk on the Heath, must have added a still farther poignance to his feelings. More satisfaction, but also more fret, must have been the consequence. On the whole, however, I believe that the satisfaction won over the fret, for Keats evidently gained in tone and temper during the

Spring, a sure evidence being that he began writing again, more and more, and better and better, until he was fairly embarked in that rush of creation which produced *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and the great *Odes*. How Sir Sidney Colvin and others can declare that Keats could not write when he was near Fanny Brawne, with the magnificent work of this Spring — when he was living, if not in the same house, at least under the same roof, with her — staring them in the face, only shows to what lengths of false reasoning prejudice may lead. The season had something to do with this spate of creation undoubtedly, but the excitement of his growing intimacy with Fanny Brawne had more. He wrote about her and he wrote away from her (in subject, I mean), but the point is that he wrote, and this in spite of all those external teasing facts which improved no whit as time went on.

His delight in the warm winds, bright sun, and peeping flowers of early Spring, is all in this little remark to Fanny Keats in a letter which Buxton Forman dates (and I think quite rightly) from an incomplete postmark as being written on Tuesday, April thirteenth:

> "I hope you have good store of double violets — I think they are the Princesses of flowers, and in a shower of rain, almost as fine as barley sugar drops are to a schoolboy's tongue."

Yet even on this very day, the teasing facts were at him again. Haydon sent him a querulous note, upbraiding him for not having lent him the money he had promised. It was a nasty thing to do, for Haydon knew quite well how hard Keats had tried to carry out his promise and the reasons why he had been unable to do so. For what appears to be the first time, Haydon's egotistical indifference to any one's comfort when his own was involved seriously hurt Keats. He answers Haydon honestly and fairly, but he tells him the flat truth, that he

has tried and failed; and he adds, with no desire to mince matters:

> "I have also ever told you the exact particulars as well as and as literally as any hopes or fear could translate them."

In the end, he breaks out:

> "It has not been my fault. I am doubly hurt at the slightly reproachful tone of your note . . . You seem'd so sure of some important help when I last saw you — now you have maimed me again; I was whole, I had began reading again — when your note came I was engaged in a Book. I dread as much as a Plague the idle fever of two months more without any fruit."

Since we know that *Why did I laugh to-night?* was written in the middle of March, it was not strictly true that the last two months had been absolutely barren. And in view of the number of poems copied at the end of the February-May journal letter to America, one cannot help wondering whether they were all written after the middle of April, or whether some can have been composed earlier, but not have been of importance enough in Keats's eyes to be reckoned "fruit." This is a point which I shall come back to in a moment; after all, there is only one poem whose position in the letter I believe to be really suspect, and Keats specifically told his sister on this same thirteenth of April: "I have written nothing and almost read nothing — but I must turn over a new leaf." The new leaf was turned over almost immediately, as we shall see.

The letter to George was resumed on Thursday, the fifteenth of April, a date which is very important to us; at least, if a theory of mine which I have several times referred to in regard to the *Bright Star* sonnet is of any value. Keats tells George that he has "been to Mrs. Bentley's this morning, and put all the letters to and from you and poor Tom

and me." This is an odd sentence, and clearly was intended to have an ending which Keats forgot to set down. Undoubtedly he meant to say that he had put the letters together, or something of the sort. What is significant to us is that he had been reading old letters. The principal impression left on his mind by this raking up of the past, if we can judge by what he says, was the unpleasant hoax played by Wells on poor little Tom; but something else came out of it, and this something was a verbal recollection of a sentence in his first letter from Scotland to Tom which stuck in his head and became incorporated in a sonnet that he wrote very soon after. If my readers will take the trouble to turn back a couple of chapters to the very interesting commentary by Professor Rusk on this letter, they will see how closely related the sentence in question is to the *Bright Star* sonnet. I have already shown why I do not believe that the sonnet, or any idea of it, can have been in Keats's mind at the time he wrote this letter,[1] but the circumstances when he came to re-read it were entirely different. The point of view of the sonnet is one only too usual with him at this time — doubt, doubt, always doubt of Fanny Brawne's constancy, he himself believing one day, ceasing to believe the next. Gazing at the star, he longs to be as steadfast and unchangeable, not solitary, as it is, but with his love, in the certainty of perfect fulfilment, and so soothed and at rest continue till death ends all. The sentence in the letter[2] which became, with only a slight alteration of purpose, incorporated in the poem is:

> "refine one's sensual vision into a sort of north star which can never cease to be open lidded and steadfast over the wonders of the great Power."

Let us suppose that Keats, meditating on his sonnet, finds running in his head this sentence from his recently re-

[1] See Vol. II, p. 25. [2] See Vol. II, p. 22.

read letter; it exactly fits his purpose and he uses it as follows:

> "Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art —
> Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
> And watching, with eternal lids apart,
> Like nature's devout, sleepless Eremite."

So far he has kept very closely to his original sentence, but when he comes to "the wonders of the great Power," instead of merely suggesting them, as in the letter, he illustrates and describes, as befits a poetical pattern. These wonders must, however, in a small compass seem to convey everything, so he paraphrases them, in time-honoured fashion, by the sea and the mountains. That we should expect; but the special recollection to him here is Scotland, hence he adds the "moors." The snow, I feel quite certain, owes its existence to nothing at all but the necessity of finding a rhyme for "task"; the word "mask" being perfectly appropriate to the obliterating effect of snow. It may be objected that "moors" is also merely a rhyme word, but this I doubt, principally because it does not properly rhyme at all. Also "shores" is not nearly so difficult a word to find a rhyme to as is "task." Then again, the "mountains and the moors" line could have been altered in a number of ways without injuring the poem, while the idea in

> "The morning waters at their priestlike task"

was too good to lose.[1]

Sir Sidney Colvin, in laying so great a stress on the verisimilitude of the snow flurries[2] in February, forgets that this same snow would hide the stars. To be sure, if we allow any weight to the realism of weather conditions, from February twenty-fourth to February twenty-sixth, when Keats was at Taylor's, there was only the thinnest

[1] For Keats's final revisions on this sonnet, see Vol. II, p. 480.
[2] See Vol. II, p. 188.

and earliest-setting of new moons, which, were it not for the obscuring snow, would help his reasoning; but my theory is equally happy in this respect, for, from April fifteenth until the twenty-fourth, the moon was a waning one, and this left the sky, at any hour when Keats would be likely to see it, under the full influence of the stars.

I do not say that all this absolutely proves that the *Bright Star* sonnet was written in mid-April, I simply say that the evidence is very strong in favour of it. Another argument is the quality of the sonnet itself, which seems to belong to the flowering period just then beginning, and to be closely related in tenor to a love poem which immediately followed it, *As Hermes once took to his feathers light*, whereas, if it were written at the end of February, it was a lone example, and its existence does not seem to tally with Keats's distinct statement to George on the thirteenth of March: "I know not why Poetry and I have been so distant lately." Keats would scarcely have made such a remark if he had done so good a thing as the *Bright Star* sonnet within a couple of weeks. A certain stiffness in handling, the result of a long rest from writing, is observable in *Why did I laugh to-night?*, and this stiffness seems to give that poem the position of pioneer after his pause, a pioneer which for some time stood alone. By the time the *Bright Star* was written, the tension had snapped, his creative force was ready to flow, and did flow abundantly from then on for a long time. It is true that Keats did not copy this sonnet in the letter to George, but that is equally true if it were written in February. The answer is not far to seek; the sonnet would have told George too much, the reason for it could not have been obscured under a subsidiary meaning as in the cases of *Why did I laugh to-night?* and *As Hermes once took to his feathers light.*

The exact day on which the *Bright Star* sonnet was written, I cannot pretend to determine. But there is a pregnant remark in his letter of April fifteenth. Shortly

after telling George of his going to Mrs. Bentley's, he says: "I am still at a stand in versifying — I cannot do it yet with any pleasure." This looks as though he had been making abortive attempts at poetry; and what more natural, in that case, than for a new attempt to turn suddenly and unexpectedly into a success. The probability of this speculation is enhanced by his seeking a start from the sentence in his old letter. I am much inclined, because of this, to hazard a conjecture that the sonnet was written on either April fifteenth, sixteenth, or seventeenth.

I have spoken of Wells's hoax played on Tom, and this seems the moment to explain it. Wells wrote a series of letters to Tom purporting to be from a woman who signed herself "Amena." This person gave out that she had fallen in love with Tom, and the poor little fellow appears to have been completely taken in. I suppose the deception must have been discovered before Tom died or Keats would not have spoken of it as a "diabolical scheme" and "a cruel deception on a sanguine Temperament," and declared that he hated it "to a sickness." Keats was cut to the quick, naturally, and announced his intention of injuring Wells in every way he could. That he ever did injure him, or make any attempt in that direction, it is folly to think; he spoke of the matter to George in hot blood, with his heart full of pain and anger. But he broke with Wells at once, and does not seem to have had anything more to do with him. Wells must have realized the justice of his action, for years after, in 1845, he wrote that when Keats "passed into the Land of Spirits" he took "one half of my heart with him."[1]

A little before the period which we have now reached, a new poem by Wordsworth was announced for publication. None of Keats's set had any sympathy with Wordsworth's predilection for poems of the *Betty Foy*, *Harry Gill* type. The name of this forthcoming work, *Peter Bell*, seemed to

[1] From an article by Buxton Forman in the *Bibliophile Year Book*, 1913.

herald another of the *genre*, and the opportunity to offer a slight chastisement to the poet for so degrading his genius — as these young men considered it — was too good to be missed. Reynolds had a pretty wit of the kind which lends itself to parody, and he promptly dashed off an amusing skit in Wordsworth's most irritatingly "simple" vein. With what seems to us a very questionable license, Reynolds entitled his lampoon *Peter Bell. A Lyrical Ballad.* To print a parody of a poem before it had appeared, from guesswork, and to call that parody by the very name of the forthcoming original, is certainly a breach of good taste if not worse. But this does not seem to have troubled either the author, or Taylor and Hessey, the publishers. Out the poem came, to the huge delight of all the Reynolds circle, except perhaps Keats, who wrote a review of it for Hunt to print in the *Examiner*, because Reynolds had asked him to get Hunt to notice it and this seemed the best way to do so. Keats says very little to George about Reynolds's *jeu d'esprit*, although he does remark by the way that "It would be just as well to trounce Lord Byron in the same manner." Keats's review, which came out in the *Examiner* for Sunday, April twenty-fifth, is short, and, as he says himself, "a little politic," for he is careful to assure the public that the author (the parody was anonymous) "had felt the finer parts of Mr. WORDSWORTH'S poetry," and here follows so good a criticism, so admirably expressed, that it alone makes the review worth while. Speaking of this aspect of the parodist, Keats says:

> "The more he may love the sad embroidery of the *Excursion*, the more will he hate the coarse samplers of Betty Foy and Alice Fell."[1]

The rest of the review is taken up with praising Reynolds's deftness, and the whole ends with this tactful sentence:

> "If we are one part amused with this, we are three parts

[1] See Vol. I, p. 319.

> sorry that any one who has any appearance of appreciating WORDSWORTH, should show so much temper at this really provoking name of *Peter Bell.*"

Keats describes his effort to George by saying: "I keep clear of all parties — I say something for and against both parties," and concludes with the consoling opinion, "I and my conscience are in luck to day — which is an excellent thing." The little paper was a very neat feat of critical trapeze work, a skilful balancing between opposite impressions, which Hunt eked out by long quotations from the parody and its Preface without farther comment. It needed none.

I have already spoken of the difficulty of dating these journal letters. It seems to have been on this same fifteenth of April that Keats, who was clearly getting in cue for writing again, suddenly broke into verse. Apropos of nothing, he begins: "Shall I treat you to a little extempore," and promptly does so. This extempore is sheer nonsense, dashed down at the instance of a sudden fit of rhyming. It is not even a joke, it is just rhyming and no more, although the fairy story which he spins out of it is amusing enough to make us wonder how the tale would end. For it does not end, as it does not begin. Just for fun, Keats divides it in the middle by writing "End of Canto XII," and beginning again with "Canto the XIII." Twenty-two lines farther on, he stops as abruptly as he had started, for, says he:

> "Brown is gone to bed — and I am tired of rhyming — there is a north wind blowing playing young gooseberry with the trees — I don't care so it helps even with a side wind a Letter to me."

One of Keats's anxieties was that no letter had come from the travellers since they started on the last lap of their journey to Birkbeck's settlement. This silence lay all Winter as a growing misery in the back of his mind. Poor fellow, how many worries were heaped on him at once, and how

bravely he sought to face them! The rhyming fit was a good sign, he was getting hold of himself.

Although Keats was tired of rhyming, he was not yet tired of writing, and before going to bed he recounted a little adventure which had happened to him the Sunday before, April eleventh. It had no consequences, which is perhaps the most important thing about it. I give it exactly as Keats jotted it down:

> "Last Sunday I took a walk towards Highgate and in the lane[1] that winds by the side of Lord Mansfield's park I met Mr. Green[2] our demonstrator at Guy's in conversation with Coleridge — I joined them, after enquiring by a look whether it would be agreeable — I walked with him at his alderman-after-dinner pace for near two miles I suppose. In those two Miles he broached a thousand things — let me see if I can give you a list — Nightingales, Poetry — on Poetical Sensation — Metaphysics — Different genera and species of Dreams — Nightmare — a dream accompanied with a sense of touch — single and double touch — a dream related — First and second consciousness — the difference explained between will and Volition — so many metaphysicians from a want of smoking the second consciousness — Monsters — the Kraken — Mermaids — Southey believes in them — Southey's belief too much diluted — a Ghost story — Good morning — I heard his voice as he came towards me — I heard it as he moved away — I heard it all the interval — if it may be called so. He was civil enough to ask me to call on him at Highgate."

There is no malice in this account, but Keats was evidently not in key to fall a victim to the spell of Coleridge's eloquence. He listened to the continuous rumble of words without enthusiasm, at least so his lack of comment leads us to suppose. All his contemporaries assure us that

[1] Millfield Lane, where Keats gave his *Poems* to Hunt in 1817.

[2] Joseph Henry Green, afterwards F.R.S. and Professor of Anatomy to the Royal Academy, had been Junior Demonstrator at St. Thomas's Hospital in 1816. He was a disciple of Coleridge's and an interpreter of his philosophy.

Coleridge was an inspired monologist; but youth, even highly intelligent youth, endures monologue but ill. Keats endured it just two miles, and seems to have felt no hunger for more, since he did not avail himself of Coleridge's invitation to call on him at Highgate. Keats was not of the sort which sits at the feet of older men. His youthful idealization of Hunt had taught him a lesson, and his admiration of Wordsworth had been greatly tempered by personal contact. He could admire profoundly, but there must always be a give and take in his relations with any man. He did admire Coleridge, but the man who had written *Christabel* and *The Ancient Mariner* only distantly resembled the portly person who shuffled along the Highgate lanes emitting an unquenchable stream of talk to which one must listen in silence as it never stopped long enough for any one else to get a word in edgewise. Keats, pulled, harried, whirled hither and thither in a hundred different eddies of feeling and perception, had no leisure to give to what did not concern him, and this sample of Coleridge's amazing conversation served to prove that nothing concerned him here. Coleridge's poetry said much that concerned him very nearly; Coleridge himself, nothing. He did not repeat the experience.

Coleridge's impression of the meeting is recorded in his *Table Talk*. To him, who talked, the two miles were but a moment of time. His recollection of the event is interesting for many reasons, although, having been taken down thirteen years later, it is not likely to be very accurate. In the *Table Talk*, Mr. Green's name is left blank; I have added it to Coleridge's account, which reads:

> "A loose, slack, not well-dressed youth met Mr. Green and myself in a lane near Highgate. Green knew him and spoke. It was Keats. He was introduced to me, and stayed a minute or so. After he had left us a little way, he came back and said: 'Let me carry away the memory, Coleridge, of having pressed your hand!' 'There is death in that

hand,' I said, when Keats was gone; yet this was, I believe, before the consumption showed itself distinctly."

It is impossible not to see that Coleridge's memory played him false in several particulars here, but the hand is important. Keats and his doctors were deceived as to the state of his health, yet to a highly sentient man like Coleridge the mere touch of his hand spelt disease. Mr. Green explained Coleridge's feeling by saying that to him Keats's hand felt "cold and clammy." [1] A recently published version of the same occurrence, written down after a conversation with Coleridge by Mr. John Frere in 1829, has much the same story to tell. In part, it says:

[2] C. "Poor Keats, I saw him once. Mr. Green, whom you have heard me mention, and I were walking out in these parts, and we were overtaken by a young man of very striking countenance whom Mr. Green recognized and shook hands with, mentioning my name; I wish Mr. Green had introduced me for I did not know who it was. He passed on, but in a few moments sprung back and said, 'Mr. Coleridge, allow me the honour of shaking your hand.' I was struck by the energy of his manner, and gave him my hand. He passed on, and we stood still looking after him, when Mr. Green said, 'Do you know who that is? That is Keats, the poet.' 'Heavens!' said I, 'when I shook him by the hand there was death!' That was about two years before he died.

F. But what was it?

C. I cannot describe it. There was a heat and a dampness in the hand. To say that his death was caused by the Review is absurd, but at the same time it is impossible adequately to conceive the effect which it must have had on his mind. It is very well for those who have a place in the world and are independent to talk of these things, they can bear such a blow, so can those who have a strong religious principle; but all men are not born Philosophers,

[1] *Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* Note.

[2] *A Talk with Coleridge*, edited by Miss E. M. Green. *Cornhill Magazine*, April, 1917.

> and all men have not those advantages of birth and education. Poor Keats had not, and it is impossible I say to conceive the effect which such a Review must have had upon him, knowing as he did that he had his way to make in the world by his own exertions, and conscious of the genius within him."

It is quite obvious that this version of the meeting is the more correct of the two. Nobody else describes Keats as loose and slack, while everyone agrees that he had a striking countenance and great energy of manner. Evidently Coleridge had forgotten a good deal of his original impression when, three years later, he dictated the passage in his *Table Talk*. What is most remarkable, however, is that Keats had been dead only eight years when the conversation with Mr. Frere took place; yet, although to the world at large he was practically unknown, to the literary world he was "Keats, the poet," and Coleridge speaks of his "genius" as an indisputable fact. Coleridge's sane and perspicacious remarks on the effect of the *Quarterly* review upon him are well nigh extraordinary, considering that the legend of his having been killed by the review was rife at the time, having been given peculiar currency by Shelley's *Adonais* and Byron's lines on Keats in *Don Juan*:

> "Strange that the mind, that very fiery particle,
> Should let itself be snuffed out by an article."

It will be remembered that Hunt also speaks of Keats's hand,[1] but to what period his remarks have reference he does not state.

Keats returned to his letter the next day with the first mention of Fanny Brawne which he had allowed to creep into it. Mrs. Brawne had appeared several times, but Fanny had been carefully excluded; even now, her appearance was the merest peep. "Brown this morning is writing some Spenserian stanzas against Mrs., Miss Brawne and

[1] See Vol. I, p. 258.

me," he says, "so I shall amuse myself with him a little: in the manner of Spenser —" Nothing in that to raise a suspicion as to the true state of affairs in George's or Georgiana's mind, nothing at all to enlighten them, unless they were sagacious enough to understand the implications of certain poems which followed. The stanzas on Brown are passable fooling, no more; their value for us is that they show the itch to write verse persisting. But a little farther on Keats has something vital to relate. Ostrich-like, he thinks the true content of his communication is hidden. But is it? Not to us, at least. And the tale he has to tell refers to a little time back; only the sonnet, which was its outcome, seems to belong to a very recent moment. The question for us is, did this sonnet precede the *Bright Star*? I confess myself unable to answer, since it is impossible to say just when this part of the letter was written; there are no more dates in it until the very end, when we have, first, the thirtieth of April, and then the third of May. What Keats says to his brother and sister-in-law is this:

> "The fifth canto of Dante pleases me more and more — it is that one in which he meets with Paulo and Francesca. I had passed many days in rather a low state of mind, and in the midst of them I dreamt of being in that region of Hell. The dream was one of the most delightful enjoyments I ever had in my life. I floated about the whirling atmosphere as it is described with a beautiful figure, to whose lips mine were joined, as it seemed for an age — and in the midst of all this cold and darkness I was warm — even flowery tree-tops sprung up, and we rested on them, sometimes with the lightness of a cloud, till the wind blew us away again. I tried a sonnet upon it — there are fourteen lines but nothing of what I felt in it — O that I could dream it every night."

It needs no knowledge of the theory of dreams and their interpretation as set forth by Freud to grasp the meaning of this. Those who believe in the Freudian hypothesis, and

find pleasure in examining literature according to the tenets of psycho-analysis, have a perfect study to their hand in this sonnet and Keats's introduction to it. For me, I prefer to let the obvious speak for itself. Vicarious though a dream joy may be, it is none the less a joy. If morning brought only the half satisfaction of an unreal experience, the strange, superlatively poignant sensations of that experience did in themselves hold a modicum of truth. The experience was false to one kind of fact, but eminently true to another kind, the imaginative. Yet it must be admitted that the truth of imaginative experience, when the passional side of life is in question, is deeply involved in danger — the danger of losing hold upon the actual to find solace in the purely visional. That Keats was too robust a man to do this, we see at every turn. This is the sole evidence we have of the languor of sensual dreaming either in his letters or his poems. He suffered intensely and continuously, but the very force and clarity of his nature forbade him from indulging in the ready opiate of unreal adventure. Considering the intensity of his feelings, and the extraordinary fervour and vividness of his imaginative conceptions, it is nothing short of amazing to see how sane and whole his life was, how single to itself and to the ideal he had set up. I do not mean that Keats reasoned all this out, as he might have done had he lived to-day, but that the unconscious sanity of the man brought about this result.

Keats was quite right in saying that he had succeeded in getting nothing of his dream into his sonnet. In spite of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's exceedingly high opinion of it, I cannot count it as even approaching his best work. Even Rossetti was forced to admit the flaw of the false rhyme of "slept" and "bereft," and the fact that, as Rossetti points out,[1] "this anomaly is all the more curious when we consider the sort of echo it gives of a line in 'Endymion,'

[1] From a letter from Rossetti to Buxton Forman.

'So sad, so melancholy, so bereft'" [1]

does not seem an adequate excuse for what is certainly a weakness in construction. There are other weaknesses in the sonnet; for instance, the equivocal rhythm of the first line,[2] which can be made to take the iambic beat only by misplacing the natural accent of the words. These are slight things, of course, and could easily be overlooked if the sonnet as a whole were of finer stuff. Unfortunately it has faults which keep it from mounting at any point into the sparkling air of perfect expression. In the first place, Keats could not really get in touch with his theme until the ninth line. The whole beginning up to this point is introduction, and dull and discursive introduction at that. "The dragon world with all its hundred eyes" is a *cliché* in thought if not expressly in form. One stale figure, "snow clad" is scarcely saved by applying it to skies; but this Keats did see and alter, "snow cold skies" was infinitely better and almost redeems its line. The last line, being an alexandrine, is worth noticing; there are but two other instances of Keats having ended a sonnet with an alexandrine,[3] his having done so here is in accord with the desire for change in the sonnet structure which was growing upon him. How far this desire led him, we shall see before long.

As Hermes once took to his feathers light seems to have been written directly into the first volume of the Cary's *Dante* he had taken with him on his Scotch tour. There were several false starts, for the sonnet did not get going easily. The first is on the inside of the recto cover; for the second, he turned the book round and began on the inside of the verso cover; the third, and last, is written on the last end-paper, and here the sonnet is copied in full.

That Keats told Fanny Brawne of his dream, and that both he and she attached a special significance to this sonnet, and, by inference, to the passage which had

[1] *Endymion* Bk. II. Line 685. [2] See Vol. I, p. 116. [3] *To a Friend who sent me some Roses*, and *On sitting down to read "King Lear" once again.* 2

inspired it, is evident from two things. One, that Keats gave the book, with his sonnet in it, to Fanny Brawne; the other, that on the flyleaf of Volume I Fanny Brawne copied the *Bright Star* sonnet. This proves nothing as to the chronological priority of either poem, but does seem to relate them as to time, and gives a strong impression of their belonging to the same period psychologically in Fanny Brawne's mind. Personally, I think it probable that Fanny Brawne had already been given the *Bright Star* sonnet some days previously to receiving the *Hermes*, and feeling for both sonnets in much the same way, copied the first into her new, and very dear, gift, so that she might always have them both together and both with the passage from Dante.

That Fanny Brawne was anything but cold, we can plainly see by this little action. And we can see something else, that the lovers were enjoying a time of happiness and confidence. We can read between the lines to any extent here; the sonnets and their position in the *Dante* — one in his handwriting, one in hers — give us every permission.

Keats's almost buoyant happiness just at this time appears in a letter written on April seventeenth to his sister Fanny. His spirits were sky-high when he wrote this delightful bit of fooling:

> "O there is nothing like fine weather, and health, and Books, and a fine country, and a contented Mind, and diligent habit of reading and thinking, and an amulet against the ennui — and, please heaven, a little claret wine cool out of a cellar a mile deep — with a few or a good many ratafia cakes — a rocky basin to bathe in, a pad nag to go you ten miles or so; two or three sensible people to chat with; two or three spiteful folkes to spar with; two or three odd fishes to laugh at and two or three mumskul[l]s to argue with — instead of using dumb bells on a rainy day — "

And here follows the rhyme, *Two or three Posies*. In his list of delights, Keats does not mention the joy he was then

experiencing, but in his "contented Mind" we see very clearly a shadow picture of Fanny Brawne.

Did Keats's circle suspect any engagement as yet? No, I think not. Severn has told that, early in the Spring of 1819, Keats took him to call on the Brawnes. But he seems not to have had the faintest idea then, nor indeed until his journey to Italy with Keats, that there was anything particular between Keats and the young daughter of the house; and he has expressly stated that he had no knowledge of there being a definite engagement until after Keats's death. Brown, who had Fanny Brawne and Keats under his nose all day, week in and week out, can scarcely have been in complete ignorance of facts so patent for any denizen of the double house to see, but how soon Keats confided in him we do not know. Mr. and Mrs. Dilke probably suspected a great deal, although their removal to Westminster may have made them rather slower in guessing the exact truth than would have been the case had they remained at Hampstead. For any general knowledge of the state in which affairs really were, I think we cannot look much before the Winter of 1820, and even then only where the most intimate of the group were concerned. Haslam, for instance, heard nothing until after Keats had left England. After all, the fact that the two families lived under the same roof and shared the same garden gave the lovers every opportunity to cheat the prying eyes of interested friends, and we may be very sure that Keats took great care that visitors to Brown's half of the premises should go away no wiser than they came.

Brown was a sociable spirit, and so was Keats until illness made him otherwise. They liked to have their friends come out from town as often as they would. We learn of the Dilkes coming out to dinner and of Hunt doing the same; of a "claret feast" somewhere, at which were present Dilke, Reynolds, Brown, and various others, "We all got a little tipsy — but pleasantly so"; of a visit with Hunt to Sir

John Leicester's Gallery, and another with Severn to the British Museum; of various calls on Mrs. Wylie; of occasional jaunts to the theatres; even of a rout at Sawrey's "which was made pleasant by Reynolds's being there." Once Keats's sociability proved a little too much for him. Here is his account of a fatiguing day:

> "Yesterday I could not write a line I was so fatigued for the day before I went to town in the morning called on your Mother, and returned in time for a few friends we had to dinner. These were Taylor, Woodhouse, Reynolds — we began cards at about 9 o'Clock, and the night coming on and continuing dark and rainy they could not think of returning to town. So we played at Cards till very daylight — and yesterday I was not worth a sixpence."

What day this "yesterday" was, is problematical, but as this is the part of the letter in which Keats quotes his review of *Peter Bell*, and that review came out on Sunday, the twenty-fifth, we may be fairly certain that he was writing during the week beginning on Monday, the nineteenth. There appears to be a break after the quotation, for Keats goes on: "The other night I went to the Play[1] with Rice, Reynolds and Martin . . . that was on Saturday — I stopt at Taylor's on Sunday with Woodhouse — and passed a quiet sort of pleasant day." By tallying up the various apparent fresh beginnings in the letter since the date of April fifteenth, it seems evident that the Sunday spent at Taylor's was the eighteenth. Among other doings of the ensuing week, Keats went to the Panorama in Leicester Square, which had two views on exhibition just then, one of the North Coast of Spitzbergen, the other of St. Petersburg, each requiring an entrance fee of one shilling.[2] Keats seems to have economized by going to only one of these exhibits, or at least only one made an impression upon him, but that made a great deal. It is with the ut-

[1] According to Keats, this was "a new dull and half damn'd opera call'd 'the Heart of Mid Lothian.'"

[2] Leigh's *New Picture of London*. 1819.

Never Acted.

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN

This present SATURDAY, April 17, 1819,

Will be acted a New Musical Drama, (in 3 acts) called

The Heart OF MID-LOTHIAN

The Scenery is entirely new—and the following VIEWS are painted from Sketches made by ALEX NASMYTH, Esq of Edinburgh, and executed by GRIEVE—

Salisbury Craigs and Arthur's Seat, with Deans's Cottage in the distance—Deans's Cottage on St. Leonard's Craigs—Inside of Dean's Cottage—Hall of Tolbooth—Muschat's Cairn—and Holyrood House, from a Garden formerly belonging to it.

In addition to which, are

The High-street, with the Tolbooth, St. Giles's Church, &c.—Duke's Walk, near Holyrood House—and a Gothic Chamber, formerly in Holyrood House.—also by Grieve.

The Outside of Dumbiedikes' House. - Whitmore.

Inside of Do. and Hut of Madge Wildfire. Hodgins.

The OVERTURE and MUSICK, which are Selections from the most approved Scotch Airs, arranged by Mr. BISHOP.

The Dresses by Mr. Palmer and Miss Egan.

Lord Oakdale by Mr. EGERTON,
Wilmot *(his Secretary)* by Mr. CONNOR,
Laird of Dumbiedikes, Mr. LISTON,
George Robertson, Mr. MACREADY,
David Deans, Mr. TERRY,
Ratcliff, Mr EMERY,
Sharpitlaw by Mr. BLANCHARD,
Saddletree by Mr. SIMMONS,

Rioters,

Meff. Comer, Treby, Norris, Crumpton, George, Gaikard, Healy, Lee, Montague, G Pyne, J. S. & C. Tett, Watts, Williams
Meſs. Collet, Goodwin, Gouriet, Grant, Heath, Louis, Platt, Vedy

Mrs Balchriſtie by Mrs DAVENPORT,
Effie Deans by Miſs STEPHENS,
Jeanie Deans, Miſs BRUNTON,
Madge Wildfire by Mrs. C. KEMBLE.

Books of the Songs to be had in the Theatre, price 10d.

After which, the Farce of

The Deaf Lover.

Capt. Meadows [the Deaf Lover] by Mr. W. FARREN,
Old Wrongward, Mr. BLANCHARD, Young Wrongward, Mr. CONNOR,
Canteen by Mr COMER, Sternhold, Mr. ATKINS, Groom, Mr SIMMONS
Robert Mr. Treby, William Mr King, John Mr Jefferies, Joe Mr Crumpton
Cook by Mr Louis, Gentlemen, Meff. Healy and Heath,
Sophia by Mrs T. HILL, Betley Bloſſom by Mrs. GIBBS.
Ladies, Meſdames Shaw and Sexton, Chambermaid, Miſs Green.

☞ *NOT AN ORDER can be admitted.*

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Mr. YATES was honoured with the most enthusiastick applause in the character of FALSTAFF, and will shortly appear in new Characters—both Tragedy & Comedy.

The new Grand Spectacle of ***FORTUNATUS & his SONS*** having been received throughout with the most unqualified success, will be repeated every Evening next week.

On account of the great demand for Places,

The Tragedy of *EVADNE* will be repeated

On Wednesday and Friday.

Due notice will be given of the next representation of The MARRIAGE of FIGARO.

PLAY BILL

KEATS WAS PRESENT ON THIS EVENING

From the original in the possession of Louis A. Holman, Esq.

most enthusiasm that he describes the picture of Spitzbergen to George, and as his attitude toward it is a proof of his avidness for all kinds of experience, real or vicarious, his intelligent interest in every kind of fact — a quality which so ably balanced his preoccupation with matters of fancy — I give it here:

> "I have been very much pleased with the Panorama of the Ship at the north Pole — with the icebergs, the Mountains, the Bears, the Wolves — the seals, the Penguins — and a large whale floating back above water — it is impossible to describe the place."

One of the most refreshing things about Keats is his perfect lack of pose. He was too great an artist to despise what was not "artistic." Everything was grist to his mill which gave him a new idea, something which his mind could work upon and assimilate. He never allowed theory to interfere with adventure, as is the habit with little souls aspiring after the æsthetic. Formulæ annoyed him, he was a free spirit.

Immediately after the description of the Panorama, there is a new date: "Wednesday Evening," a Wednesday which we must suppose to have been April twenty-eighth. This date is very important because, following at once upon it, Keats copies *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*. As the poem has several corrections in it, and an abortive beginning to the second line of the eleventh stanza, we may conclude that it had just been composed. This would seem to determine the day on which it was written as being April twenty-eighth, 1819.

Leigh Hunt is responsible[1] for our knowledge of what is probably the fact, that Keats got the idea of his poem from the title of a translation, formerly imputed to Chaucer, of a poem by Alain Chartier, the court poet of Charles the

[1] In an introduction to the poem when it was printed in the *Indicator* on May 10, 1820; reprinted in Buxton Forman's Library Edition of Keats's works.

Second of France. This title — none other indeed than *La Belle Dame Sans Mercy* — had already intrigued him, for he took it for the name of the Provençal ditty sung by Porphyro to Madeline in the *Eve of St. Agnes*. That Keats, in his second use of it, gave the last word its French spelling, is indicative of his sense of taste and the extent to which it had fascinated him. But there was more in this old English translation to set Keats on his way, for a note prefixed to the poem explained that M. Alain "framed this dialogue between a gentleman and a gentlewoman, who finding no mercy at her hand dieth for sorrow." The point for us to notice is that it was the title and this note that gave Keats his *Belle Dame* and not the poem itself, which, as Sir Sidney Colvin says, is "a cold allegoric dialogue." The hunt for sources, ever dear to the heart of scholars, is rather more important than usual here, for by it I believe we learn the true genesis of the poem, and considerable of the workings of Keats's mind at just this time. We will, then, go into the matter a little and see what we may find.

After commenting, much as Sir Sidney has done, on Chartier's poem, Professor de Sélincourt decides that "in idea and atmosphere Keats's poem is closer to Spenser's description of Phædria." This description is to be found at the beginning of the Sixth Canto of the Second Book of the *Faerie Queene*. In Spenser, a knight, wandering beside a river, encounters a lady in a small boat. The lady is singing gaily to herself, but on the knight's calling to her she draws in to the shore and takes him into the boat, with the ostensible intention of ferrying him across the river. Once on board, however, the lady, who is "fresh and fayre," essays to charm the knight in various ways. She tells him "merry tales" which she drowns with "laughter vaine" and turns "all her pleasaunce to a scoffing game." Then she falls to decking her head with garlands and putting "fresh flowrets" about her neck. The knight is greatly

delighted at all this and asks her name, which the lady tells him is Phædria and adds that she is a servant to Acrasia, whom they both know to be an enchantress. After a while, the boat touches at an island. The pair land, and the lady guides the knight to a "shady dale," where she takes his head upon her lap and lulls him to sleep with a "love lay." As soon as he is fast asleep, she pours "liquors strong" upon his eyes to keep him so, gets into her boat and departs. From this point, Spenser's tale has no resemblance to Keats's.

The first thing to be noted for a comparative analysis is that the whole feeling of Spenser's episode is totally unlike that of Keats. Let us tabulate the likenesses and unlikenesses between the two poems. For the parallels: A knight meets a beautiful lady who makes love to him. She wears a garland on her head, and leads him to a retired place where she sings to him and where he falls asleep. She has knowledge of herbs. She is connected with an enchantress. The knight being asleep, she deserts him. For the differences: Spenser's lady comes in a boat. She is full of mirth. She takes the knight into her boat instead of the knight placing her on his "pacing steed." She scoffs and wantons, whereas Keats's lady never ceases weeping and lamenting. In Keats's poem, the knight takes an active part in the love-making; in Spenser's, he is perfectly passive. In Spenser, the lady puts garlands on her own head; in Keats, the knight makes a garland for her. There is no dream in Spenser's poem, and the whole dénouement of Keats's tale is quite other than Spenser's, whose knight awakes in shame to think that he has lost so much time in "slouthfull sleepe," and with no thought of the lady endeavours to leave the island.

Certain actions, then, Keats seems to have taken from Spenser, but his atmosphere he must certainly have found elsewhere, or at least whatever of it he did not invent himself, which was far the greater part. I think no one has ever

thought of seeking for the colouring of Keats's poem in *Palmerin of England*, and yet there is so much of it in that book that it must be taken into careful consideration. We know that Keats was reading *Palmerin* at this time, and in *Palmerin* forlorn knights abound. The type of fairy lore made use of in *La Belle Dame* is ever present in *Palmerin*. It is true, there is no event in that book which bears the faintest resemblance to what we may term the plot of *La Belle Dame*, but there is nearly everything else. For instance, Keats's description of the melancholy "Knight-at-arms," "so haggard and so woebegone," is tallied in many places. To give only a few: In the first volume, we read that Palmerin in grief, thinking that his lady, Polinarda, does not care for him, that he has offended her, will take no food, "he remained, leaning upon one hand with his eyes fixed upon the fountain below him . . . With this he paused awhile, weakness depriving him both of strength and breath to express the words which sorrow and love suggested." It will be remembered that Keats's knight loiters by a lake, which in this passage is parallelled by the fountain. A little later on in the same volume is: "And in these thoughts, *sad one hour, and sadder another*, he travelled on." The words italicized here, Keats scored, which shows the impression they made upon him. In the second volume, we find: "And if at any time he was at leisure he passed it in melancholy contemplation under the trees, recounting his sorrows." Again, we have this particularly striking resemblance: "lying with his face over that clear and quiet water, he began to call his lady Polinarda to mind, and the length of time it was since he had seen her . . . the passion therefore became so strong upon him, that his strong heart failed, and such was the power of these fantastic thoughts over him, that with the semblance of one dead he lay at the foot of the willow trees."

We must not forget that Keats's knight met a lady "in the meads," who is described as "a faery's child" and

whose hair we are especially told was "long" and her eyes "wild." We are not directly told that she was in trouble of some sort, but that is clearly inferred. *Palmerin* gives us no exact reproduction of this, but some very close indications, as follows: At the very beginning of the book, a lady appears who is not only "fair by nature, but her attire made her seem fair," and "she was the daughter of the lady enchantress." Farther on in the same volume is another episode: "So it befel, that one day at evening, about half a league from the city of London, he espied a damsel on a white palfrey come riding toward him, her hair spread over her shoulders, and her garments seeming to be greatly misused; all the way as she rode, she used many shrieks, and grievous lamentations, filling the air with her cries." This is a traitorous young woman, a servant, or maid, to the sorceress Eutropa. In the fourth volume is an even more exact comparison: "while he of the Tyger was washing his hands and face, his helmet being placed upon a stone beside him [again there is water, be it observed], there rushed out a damsel from the thickest of the wood, with her hair dishevelled, her face streaming with tears, her colour gone, and her apparel all torn by the trees." A still better one is to be found in the second volume: "he espied a damsel come riding towards him, her hair loose, and she using such speed as the fear she was in occasioned." Keats's lady is not described as weeping until the grot is reached, but the fact is implied throughout. Keats's knight sets her on his "pacing steed" and leads her, as is shown by her bending to him when she sings. In *Palmerin*, ladies are constantly being picked up and placed on palfreys: "then placing her on her palfrey he rode with her and her company along the valley," "placing Arlanza on a palfrey which was brought her, he returned to his company, talking to her as they went." They are even led at times: "Primaleon, to pay Don Duardos something of the debt of their old friendship, would lead the queen

of Scots, his daughter-in-law's palfrey by the bridle, till she came to the palace gate."

There are references to garlands for the head in *Palmerin* as well as in the *Faerie Queene*, while Keats's line "And made sweet moan" is often duplicated in the old romance: "woeful moan of the ladies," "which may urge you to remember my moan," "who thus framed his moan." Keats's lady uses her grief as a means to get the knight into her toils, a practice quite common in *Palmerin*, where it is recounted: "The damsels whom Eutropa sent out, each using subtlety with tears and lying stories which craved help for some just cause"; also "preparing herself to a deceitful course, and intermeddling her talk with tears."

I have already said that there is no such tale in *Palmerin* as Keats wove for his poem, but there are certain parallel, if unrelated, parts of it. One of these tells of a damsel "of rare and excellent beauty" who has a wounded knight carried into her castle, which Knight, having recovered, would go his way, but "grieving to see him so bent upon departing, she strove with loving words to detain him . . . oftentimes confessing to him in plain words her love." We have seen that there is no "grot" in the *Faerie Queene*; in *Palmerin* there is a very large and fine one "like a gateway, hewn in the rock," and although the knight's reason for being there bears no sort of likeness to the reason which brought Keats's knight to his, there is some resemblance between the two, for Keats's cave is an "elfin grot," and the one in *Palmerin* "had for long time been the abode of famous enchanters." Keats's knight wakes on the "cold hill's side"; in *Palmerin*, Florian enters the cavern, "Then quickening his pace, it was not long before he found himself on the other side of the Sierra, in a great square field."

There is nothing resembling the dream in *Palmerin*, and yet I think that Keats obtained much of the picture of it from that work, for Florian, once more in the cave, "look-

ing round about the court, he saw that it was full of statues of famous men," and Keats's "pale Kings and Princes too" seems taken very directly from the description of the kings and princes embalmed in the mortuary temple on the Perilous Isle, which is one of the closing scenes of *Palmerin.*

I have dwelt on all this at so great length, because I wish it to prepare a statement which I am aware will be somewhat startling. It is, indeed, nothing more, nor less, than that I believe, after carefully examining all the data, *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* not to be an autobiographical poem, and not connected, except in the most general way, with Keats himself and Fanny Brawne. Far from the poem bearing any reference to some tiff or misunderstanding between the lovers, I think it proves exactly the opposite — that the *rapprochement* of ten days before, evinced in the *Bright Star* and *As Hermes once took to his feathers light* sonnets, had suffered no change. Keats was in perfect cue for writing, as he would assuredly not have been had any sudden quarrel upset his equilibrium. And he was more than that, he was so abundantly free to apply himself to poetry that he could even experiment in new methods and modes. For *La Belle Dame* is essentially an experimental poem.

I have already pointed out[1] how earnestly Keats sought to discover his proper direction, and this was never more true than during the Winter and Spring of 1819. He had laboured intermittently at the epic form, as embodied in *Hyperion,* for months, but without, in his own opinion, attaining any great measure of success. He had begun it twice, as I shall explain in a later chapter, but neither attempt satisfied him. The second, that which we call *Hyperion,* seems to have been carried as far as we know it when, in April, he lent his manuscript to Woodhouse. Why none of Keats's biographers have made use of Woodhouse's remarks about this manuscript in a note in his copy of

[1] See Vol. I, p. 602.

Endymion,[1] I cannot conceive, for they are of the utmost importance, largely on account of the time when they were written. The note is carefully dated "April. 1819." What Woodhouse says is this: "K. lent me the fragment here alluded to for perusal. It contains 2 books & ½ — (about 900 lines in all). He said he was dissatisfied with what he had done of it; and should not complete it. This is much to be regretted." So we see that Keats's disgust with the poem long anticipated his statements on the subject to Reynolds in the following September. Already, by April, he had laid it aside, more or less definitely in his own opinion. Here, then, was a direction which appeared to have failed him. But the urge to find his way continued. The *Eve of St. Agnes*, however, he could not help seeing bore unmistakable signs of success; it was not finished to his satisfaction yet, but he was not in a mood for revision, only for creation. His old love, the age of chivalry, had stood him in good stead in *St. Agnes*, could he not attack it from a new angle and find a path in so doing? The idea was an inspiriting one, and he forthwith let his subconscious mind play with it a little. The result was a welding of an old ballad form with a type of atmosphere so novel as to be nothing short of astounding. Working from Chartier's intriguing title, with a hint from one of Spenser's stories and the absolutely enchanting properties which were scattered for him all through the four volumes of *Palmerin*, Keats suddenly and unexpectedly produced one of the finest poems in all literature, and a poem so utterly fresh that it opened to English poetry an entirely unexplored field. To us, familiars of the region through Keats's disciples, the pre-Raphaelites, *La Belle Dame* remains the chief of its *genre*, although the peculiar quality of its atmosphere is, necessarily, no longer so striking. It seems fair to assume that Keats never quite realized what marvelous pioneer work he had done in this one short poem, since it

[1] Owned by W. van R. Whitall, Esq., of New York.

remains the sole specimen of its kind which he wrote. But we must not forget how brief a time was left him to write, and how crowded with work that time was. Also, there is another thing: Keats's inveterate habit of keeping a number of poems going at once. When a mood was on him, he wrote as long as it lasted; if his mood changed, he dropped the poem on which he was engaged, then and there, and turned to something else. When the former mood returned, if it did, he went back to his abandoned poem. Frequently this occurred several times in the course of one poem. This is the reason for the various fragments found in his portfolios after his death. In these cases, he had died before the special moods required had happened to return.

La Belle Dame Sans Merci was the product of a very special mood indeed, and it did not happen to re-visit him during the remainder of his writing life, but it seems very probable that in this poem we have a clear indication of a direction which he would certainly have followed had time been vouchsafed him.

The "kisses four" with which Keats's knight closed the elfin damsel's "wild wild eyes" have been the source of much comment, and the first commentator was Keats himself. Immediately after copying the poem in the letter to George, he wrote:

> "Why four kisses — you will say — why four because I wish to restrain the headlong impetuosity of my Muse — she would have fain said 'score' without hurting the rhyme — but we must temper the Imagination as the Critics say with Judgement. I was obliged to choose an even number that both eyes might have fair play, and to speak truly I think two a piece quite sufficient. Suppose I had said seven there would have been three and a half a piece — a very awkward affair and well got out of on my side —"

This is most excellent fooling, but it covered a quandary. In specifying the exact number of kisses, Keats was simply

following the old ballad tradition, as he knew quite well; but the question was how well known would this tradition be to the majority of readers. To anyone unfamiliar with the quaint exactness of enumeration so beloved of the ancient balladists, was not the line open to ridicule? And any suspicion of ridicule was bound to shiver the atmosphere of the poem to atoms. So Keats, with his critical instinct jealously awake for the safety of his strange and beautiful atmosphere, proceeded to step outside his poem and ridicule it himself as an experiment. His was kindly ridicule, but what would that of the critics be? In the end, he distrusted his audience so thoroughly that he altered the line, and very much for the worse. When, a year later, the poem was printed in the *Indicator*, Keats was too worn out and discouraged to do battle for his original conception, and let Hunt persuade him to alterations which he probably would not have countenanced before his illness. In every case where Keats changed the poem, he committed a blunder, something very unusual with him, whose corrections were, almost without exception, improvements. We do not certainly know that Hunt was the instigator of the changes, Woodhouse may have had a hand in them for, in his Commonplace Book where the original is copied with only the slightest of differences from the letter version, there is a pencil note — written, Buxton Forman thinks, by Taylor — which reads: "Vide Album for alterations." Some of Keats's friends must have had the good sense to prefer the poem as Keats first wrote it, however, for Lord Houghton in his 1848 edition printed it as Woodhouse set it down. There is no sort of doubt that the best version is the one sent in the letter to George, and happily Professor de Sélincourt gives it letter perfect in his editions. It is a thousand pities that the *Indicator* version was ever resurrected; it ruins a perfect work of art.

Immediately after *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, Keats copied another poem into his interminable letter. This

was the tripping little fragment known as the *Song of the Four Fairies*, although Keats entitled it *Chorus of Fairies*. It is really a dialogue between Salamander, the spirit of fire; Zephyr, the spirit of air; Dusketha, the spirit of earth; and Breama, the spirit of water. The poem has some agreeable conceits in it, but only one noteworthy passage, that in which Zephyr begs Breama to

[1] "Come with me, oer tops of trees,
To my fragrant Pallaces,
Where they ever floating are
Beneath the cherish of a Star
Call'd vesper."

At the end, Keats suddenly departs from his trochaic heptasyllables to break into a series of irregularly timed lines based upon a highly variable anapestic-iambic pattern whose four stresses alone link it to his original form. The audacious liberties of rhythm in which Keats indulges here are another proof of his longing for innovation, and the five lines in which he plays these pranks are rhythmically quite charming. The poem ends sharply on a short line as though the poet had become tired of it, as probably he had. Rossetti pronounced this poem as "unworthy of Keats at this period," and in spite of the rhythmical subtleties of the last lines, which no poet of Rossetti's period could be expected to relish, I imagine few people will feel called upon to disagree with him.

Nothing is more curious to watch, throughout these long letters, than the complete changes of interest and feeling which Keats underwent from day to day. We get only the barest conception of his personality if we attempt to isolate these gusts of thought from one another and study them in a series of unbroken divisions. During this last week of April, Keats was enormously occupied with poetry, but not

[1] Copied from a holograph. Author's Collection. This holograph differs slightly from both the version in the letter and that printed by Lord Houghton.

so much so as to exclude other intellectual interests. Directly after breaking off with the unfinished line of the *Four Fairies*, Keats starts abruptly on a new train of thought. So radical is this change that it seems as if this must be a new beginning which we should attribute to Thursday, April twenty-ninth, but I do not think so, I think the date changed earlier, and that the *Four Fairies* began the Thursday section. For what does his sharp stopping of the *Fairies* mean but that he has something else which he very much wants to say. Of course, I may be wrong in this; it does not matter very much either way. At any rate, his new preoccupation proved a very suggestive one. He begins:

> "I have been reading lately two very different books, Robertson's America and Voltaire's Siècle de Louis XIV. It is like walking arm in arm between Pizarro and the great-little monarch."

The contemplation of the state of the populace in the two countries leads him on to a series of reflections that, in sum, reveal the type of philosophy to which he was coming to adhere more and more. This whole passage is as near to a statement of a creed as Keats ever formulated. The passage is so long that it cannot be quoted in full, but in paraphrasing parts of it I have been careful to leave out nothing essential.

His argument starts from the following premise and query:

> "The whole appears to resolve into this — that Man is originally a poor forked creature subject to the same mischances as the beasts of the forest, destined to hardships and disquietude of some kind or other. If he improves by degrees his bodily accommodations and comforts — at each stage, at each ascent there are waiting for him a fresh set of annoyances — he is mortal and there is still a heaven with its Stars above his head. The most interesting question that can come before us is, How far by the persevering endeavors of a seldom appearing Socrates Mankind may be made happy —"

Supposing that, could it be effected, perfect happiness were ever attained on earth, Keats thinks that the thought of death could not be borne, and this thought, increasing in intensity with the years, would gather such an accumulation of misery into the last days of every man as to leave the sum total much what it is now, but deprive sorrow of its educational value. From this, he deduces a complete ethical system in this wise:

> "The common cognomen of this world among the misguided and superstitious is 'a vale of tears' from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to Heaven. What a little circumscribed straightened notion! Call the world if you please 'The vale of Soul-making.' Then you will find out the use of the world (I am speaking now in the highest terms for human nature admitting it to be immortal which I will here take for granted for the purpose of showing a thought which has struck me concerning it) I say '*Soul-making*' — Soul as distinguished from an Intelligence. There may be intelligences or sparks of the divinity in millions — but they are not Souls till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself. Intelligencies are atoms of perception — they know and they see and they are pure, in short they are God."

Postulating thus, he proceeds to propound his query and answer it as follows:

> "How then are Souls to be made? How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given them — so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each one's individual existence? How but by the medium of a world like this? This point I sincerely wish to consider because I think it a grander system of salvation than the christian religion — or rather it is a system of Spirit creation."

He finds this system to be "effected by three grand materials acting the one upon the other for a series of years." These materials are "the *Intelligence* — the

human heart (as distinguished from intelligence or Mind) and the *World or Elemental space.*" Putting this, as he says, "in the most homely form possible," he goes on:

> "I will call the *world* a School instituted for the purpose of teaching little children to read — I will call the *human heart* the *horn Book* read in that School — and I will call the *Child able to read, the Soul* made from that *School* and its *horn book.* Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul? . . . Not merely is the Heart a Hornbook, It is the Mind's Bible, it is the Mind's experience, it is the text from which the Mind or Intelligence sucks its identity. As various as the Lives of Men are — so various become their Souls, and thus does God make individual beings, Souls, Identical Souls of the sparks of his own essence."

There is nothing particularly new in all this, be it admitted. The curious thing about it is that Keats should have worked it out for himself, living as he did among men who were quite contented with the orthodox teaching of the Church of England. Hunt and Shelley were the exceptions to this rule in the circle of Keats's friends, and neither man's religious opinions weighed a feather with him. So far as we know, Keats was not in the habit of reading philosophy, or delving into the mysteries of ancient religions, and there is no evidence to show that he had ever read Swedenborg, D'Holbach, Herder, or any of the thinkers who flooded the eighteenth century with novel theological doctrines, constructive or destructive. The point of view at which he had arrived seems to have been spun out of his own entrails, if I may use such an expression. It came from more than his heart, more than his mind, it sprang from the very mid-most of his being. It was the fine thread drawn from his ever strengthening ego.

His conclusions, when he reached them, were — for his surroundings, place, and moment — nothing short of subversive. They are:

> "This appears to me a faint sketch of a system of Salvation which does not offend our reason and humanity — I am convinced that many difficulties which christians labour under would vanish before it."

And after suggesting that Christianity may be derived from older religions, he dares a most heterodox theory, to wit:

> "Why may they not have made this simple thing even more simple for common apprehension by introducing Mediators and Personages in the same manner as in the heathen mythology abstractions are personified? . . . For as one part of the human species must have their carved Jupiter; so another part must have the palpable and named Mediator and Saviour, their Christ, their Oromanes and their Vishnu."

Keats had evidently read more along the lines of comparative religions than we are aware of, but in his case a hint was enough to start him exploring the spheres. It was not only in poetry that he was an experimenter; in thought also he was not content with barriers. Where his probing insight would have carried him had he lived, it is impossible to say. Already he was far beyond the bounds which confined his friends.

The next date in the letter is "Friday — April 30 —" and Keats at once begins:

> "Brown has been here rummaging up some of my old sins — that is to say sonnets. I do not think you remember them so I will copy them out as well as two or three lately written. I have just written one on Fame — which Brown is transcribing and he has his book and mine. I must employ myself perhaps in a sonnet on the same subject —"

Here follows one of the two sonnets on Fame, this one evidently improvised at the very moment of writing. It is not a good sonnet, and Keats got into a little trouble with the sestet. Writing in the Shakespearian mode, his sestet

should have consisted of a quatrain and a couplet; but here Keats, having written the first three lines in what was evidently intended to be quatrain form, suddenly brings in a new rhyme for his fourth line, rhymes his fifth with it, and forces his sixth to hark back to the second for its echo. This, I am sure, is no experimental effort, but a pure case of being stuck and getting out as best he can. The reason why I am convinced of this is that the second line originally ended with the word "taste," but when the fourth line with which it should rhyme was reached, the general sound of "taste" tricked him into the false rhyme "space." Perceiving his error almost immediately, and unable to find an appropriate word for his "grateful bees" which would rhyme with "space," realizing also that his "Undisturbed Lake has crystal space" was too good a line to lose, he gave up the quatrain form and put "feed" at the end of the second line. Another good line gave him the needed rhyme for "space," and forgetting for a moment the order of his rhymes, he finished with another nice line: "And spoil our pleasures in his selfish fire." Soon, however, seeing that he had left "feed" no companion, he scratched out his sixth line entirely and substituted the extremely weak "Spoilt his salvation by a fierce miscreed."

The second sonnet on Fame[1] is better technically, yet it is a singularly dull poem, and the semi-cynical, semi-jocose, tone of it is not alluring. The first line is an almost exact "steal" from Dryden, where in the Epilogue to the first part of the *Conquest of Grenada* is a passage beginning:

"Fame, like a little Mistress of the Town."[2]

This passage is, in idea, an almost perfect duplicate to

[1] These sonnets are printed in inverse order in all editions of Keats's poems. I deal with them here as they appear in the letter.

[2] This parallel was pointed out in a recent letter to the *Times Literary Supplement* by E. H. W. Meyerstein.

Keats's sonnet. The fact that, two months later, Keats was writing *Lamia* — a poem which shows clearly the influence of Dryden's versification — makes Keats's obvious theft here not a little important, for it seems to prove that he was reading Dryden with some intentness during the Spring, although he says nothing about it. Keats's indebtedness to Dryden in this sonnet seems to have escaped Sir Sidney Colvin's notice, but, because of it, the passage he quotes from Brown's *Britannia's Pastorals* seems superfluous.

There is a third sonnet in this group of which Keats says nothing, and we may reasonably assume it to be one of the exhumed "sins." It is entitled *To Sleep*, and would have been an excellent sonnet had it ever been revised, a good sonnet and something of an experiment, for while the octave consists of two quatrains in the regular Shakespearian manner, the sestet rhymes (does not, as a matter of fact, but was certainly meant to) in rather an odd way. The first line of it echoes the second and fourth lines of the octave, the second line follows the fifth and seventh of the octave, the last lines form a quatrain. As a matter of fact, in this quatrain Keats rhymed "lord" and "wards," which was clearly an oversight. In the transcript of the sonnet made by Woodhouse, "hoards" is written instead of "lord," but Lord Houghton printed the word as "lords." Readers may take their pick of the two versions; which Keats really meant, we cannot know.

How much before this thirtieth of April Keats wrote *To Sleep*, it is impossible to tell, but by the evidence of style and experimentation I feel sure it was quite a recent performance. It was, we know, written in 1819, for Woodhouse so dates it. That this strangely patterned sestet was intentional, there can be no manner of doubt. Keats was not in love with the couplet ending of the Shakespearian sonnet. He had sought to relieve its monotony in *As Hermes once took to his feathers light* by making the last line

an alexandrine; here he tried to break it up entirely. This desire to introduce something new and different into a traditional form places the sonnet definitely as belonging to this Spring. That hard-working, but very unpoetical, person, Buxton Forman, was much mystified by

> "Then save me or the passed day will shine
> Upon my pillow breeding many woes."

He wished "tressed" substituted for "passed" on the strength of a most inferior and fragmentary version in the copy of *Paradise Lost* given to Mrs. Dilke, and published in the *Athenæum* in 1872. This version is so unutterably bad, besides being unfinished, that I am very sure it represents an early, abandoned attempt. The difficult lines are really as plain as day. Any one who has suffered from insomnia will attest their absolute truth, for who, lying awake at night, has not found the events of the day before full of thorns to prick his sensitive midnight consciousness withal.

To Sleep is not an end to the poetry in the letter; not at all. Keats succeeds it with a preface to another poem, the *Ode to Psyche*. This, the first of his completed odes,[1] he introduces to George and Georgiana in these words:

> "The following Poem — the last I have written — is the first and the only one with which I have taken even moderate pains. I have for the most part dash'd off my lines in a hurry. This I have done leisurely — I think it reads the more richly for it, and will I hope encourage me to write other things in even a more peaceable and healthy spirit."

At last Keats had struck a direction which he could follow, happy in the conviction that he had found at least one medium perfectly fitted to his genius. He had already made a shot at it, in the fragment of the *Ode to Maia* written the year before at Teignmouth, but that poem he had been forced to leave in all its glorious incompleteness,

[1] The juvenile *Ode to Apollo* and the *Ode to Fanny* do not properly belong in this category.

the mood which produced it had never returned. Nor had it returned now, but something akin to it in attitude had come, and this something he had brought to a finish.

I am quite in accord with Sir Sidney Colvin in believing the *Psyche* to be the first of Keats's great odes in point of time. Does not he himself tell us so plainly when he declares this the only poem lately written with which he has taken pains? Could he have said as much had he already written the *Grecian Urn* or the *Ode on Melancholy*, and is it at all likely that if he had written these poems he would not have copied them into this letter to George? The *Ode on Indolence* clearly pronounces itself as composed later, as we shall see, and we know the *Nightingale* to have been written in May. There are other reasons for assigning to the *Psyche* the initial place among the odes; first and foremost, its distinct resemblance to the manner of *I Stood Tip-toe* in the first stanza, then the various harkings-back to some of his old preoccupations — the mountain pine,[1] for instance, while the "dark cluster'd trees" that "Fledged the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep,"[2] clearly points to his re-reading of his letters from Scotland. *Palmerin* crops up here, too, in the line:

> "Nor virgin choir to make delicious moan,"

and again

> "O let me be thy choir and make a moan."

Professor de Sélincourt has remarked that a phrase from each of the three important odes of this period, the *Grecian Urn*, the *Ode on Melancholy*, and the *Nightingale*, is repeated, or nearly so, in the *Psyche*, and begs us to notice how, by this means, Keats "knits them all together." I cannot subscribe to Professor de Sélincourt's deduction; rather I believe that Keats used his *Psyche* as a quarry, and

[1] See Vol. I, p. 148. [2] See Vol. II, p. 31.

took the lines in question from it to put them into succeeding poems which he knew to be far better.

There is much of the younger Keats in this ode. "Tender eye-dawn of aurorean love," "fond believing lyre," "soft delight," these are the sort of expressions we find in his work of 1816, but which he had for the most part outgrown at this time. He is not betrayed into anything of the sort in his other odes. In fine, there is much beauty in the *Psyche*, and not a little weakness. Keats says that he took pains with the poem, but the pains were evidently not as rigorously employed as they might have been. There are two unrhymed lines in the published version, a slight blemish, but still a blemish where the pattern is a fully rhymed one. It is only fair to say, however, that in one of these cases the rhyme was originally there, but disappeared in revision. In all probability, Keats did not revise the poem until he was preparing the *Lamia* volume for publication, and at that time he was weary with illness and not his keenly perceptive self, although dropping rhymes by accident during the work of correction was all too common with him, as witness *Endymion*. It is instructive to note that those corrections done after his illness in 1820 are not so certainly wise as were his earlier ones. We have seen how he marred *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*; in this ode, he changed the delightful expression "freckle-pink" for flowers to the commonplace "silver-white." A final reason for giving to the *Psyche* the position of pioneer is that Keats does not seem to have quite settled into his stride when he wrote it, to have quite made up his mind what the particular form of this type of poem was to be. Later he crystallized his odes into a definite structure which he varied only in detail. This structure consisted principally of stanzas with an equal number of lines, the number being ten in all the odes except *To Autumn*, to which he permitted eleven.

After the *Ode to Psyche* in the letter, Keats wrote:

"Here endethe ye Ode to Psyche."

and at once, as a sort of fresh heading, he put in Latin:

"Incipit altera Sonneta."

I have spoken many times of the passion for experiment which seems to have dominated Keats all this Spring, and following this, his longing to alter the form of the sestets of his sonnets. Now, suddenly, he flares out in the unaccustomed rôle of iconoclast. The conventional sonnet, which he wrote superlatively well in both forms, no longer contented him; yet he wanted some sort of a sonnet, and forthwith proceeded to invent an entirely new one. The why of his doing so he explained to George:

> "I have been endeavouring to discover a better Sonnet Stanza than we have. The legitimate[1] does not suit the language over well from the pouncing rhymes — the other appears too elegiac — and the couplet at the end of it has seldom a pleasing effect — I do not pretend to have succeeded — it will explain itself."

The sonnet follows:

[2]"If by dull rhymes our English must be chain'd,
And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet
Fetter'd, in spite of pained loveliness,
Let us find out, if we must be constrain'd,
Sandals more interwoven and complete
To fit the naked foot of Poesy:
Let us inspect the Lyre, and weigh the stress
Of every chord, and see what may be gain'd
By ear industrious, and attention meet;
Misers of sound and syllable, no less
Than Midas of his coinage, let us be
Jealous of dead leaves in the bay wreath crown;
So, if we may not let the Muse be free,
She will be bound with garlands of her own."

[1] Petrarchan.

[2] In the letter, the sonnet does not go beyond the fourth line. It is quoted here from a version written in Sir Charles Dilke's copy of *Endymion*. Buxton Forman.

This is obviously merely a study for a rhyme-scheme, and this scheme is so interwoven and complicated that I will supplement the poem by giving it. It runs: A.B.C.A.B.D. C.A.B.C.D.E.D.E. The fourteen lines are preserved, but everything else is new, even the break at the end of the octave which relieved the monotony of the Petrarchan sonnet and gave a tilt to the subject that started the sestet with a new zest, is gone; and the somewhat same effect got by the quatrains and final couplet of the Shakespearian form is to seek. This makes Keats's sonnet a bit monotonous. He has effectively done away with the "pouncing rhymes," but at the expense of losing the chime of rhyme-return altogether. It is gleefully pointed out by the sticklers for convention that Keats never wrote another sonnet after this recipe. Perhaps he never would have done so; but it should also be said that he wrote only two sonnets after this, and both of them were highly personal and emotional pieces in which he took the first form that came to his hand, being in no mood for anything save to pour out the feelings in his heart. If he stopped experimenting in sonnet form, he did not stop in his other chief form, the ode. Each of his odes was an experiment within a pattern which he had largely found for himself. When we realize that a bare nine months comprised the whole rest of his writing life, we shall not be so sure as most critics profess themselves to be as to what he would, or would not, have done had he lived. The subject of this experimental sonnet is of itself sufficient to prove how much he desired to escape from the strait-jacket of tradition, to prune all semblance of "dead leaves" from his own fresh luxuriance. Yet we must not fail to observe that it is his ear principally which is unsatisfied, it is a new music that he craves. In the matter of poetic "music," Keats has had few equals.

Keats closed his long letter to George with this little paragraph:

> "This is the third of May, and everything is in delightful forwardness; the violets are not withered before the peeping of the first rose."

It is quite evident that, from the middle of April until the middle of May, Keats was really happy. These were the last weeks of his life when he can be said to have been so. Cruel as fate had been to him hitherto, its extreme of cruelty was to come. At the moment, he was enjoying a peaceful and fruitful interlude. The writing fever was by no means assuaged by the poems sent to George; on the contrary, it was only just begun. To May, belong the four remaining odes known to have been written at Hampstead. Their dates are problematical, but from internal and external evidence I believe their order to be: the *Grecian Urn* first; then the *Ode on Melancholy*: after that, the *Nightingale*; and finally the *Ode on Indolence*.

The first thing to be noted about the *Grecian Urn* is that the inspiration for it came from the Elgin Marbles, from that part of the frieze of the Parthenon which shows the cattle being brought to the sacrifice. No urn had anything to do with it, but the reason for the urn in the title is not hard to discover. By far the greater part of the Parthenon frieze is taken up with cavalcades of men on horses or driving chariots, and it is precisely these parts which most people think of when the frieze is mentioned. Also, in Keats's day, the frieze was commonly spoken of as the *Elgin Marbles*. If Keats had called his poem *Ode on the Elgin Marbles*, not only would the title have been an ugly one, it would have been a misleading and confusing one as well. For where in his poem were the cavalcades of horses, and the fine virile youths astride of them? The attention of most readers would have been taken up in seeking for these, and only on a second reading would the poem have been fully apprehended. Yet it was imperative that the idea of Greece should be given at the outset, Greek sculp-

ture must somehow be implied. Keats had seen Grecian urns in fact and picture, and the word "urn" is an attractive one and full of artistic significance. With the idea of attributing his bas-relief to an imaginary urn, the difficulty was solved, and the poem forthwith became *Ode on a Grecian Urn.*

No poem of Keats's has had its origins more diligently sought for than the *Grecian Urn.* But in this case such searching seems peculiarly unnecessary. Keats had spent two years intermittently gazing at the Elgin Marbles, he had pored again and again over volumes of drawings from the antique in Haydon's studio, he had read Goldsmith's *History of Greece* at Haydon's instigation, and he had done all this with an attention and imagination ever on the alert. How keen was his interest in these things may be seen by the fact that a tracing from a plate of the so-called Sosibos vase, made by him, was discovered in the Dilke Collection.[1] (The book in which he found the plate was the *Musée Napoléon,* a work descriptive of the classic spoils filched by the conquering Napoleon and brought to Paris. The text of these four monumental volumes was illustrated by outline engravings.) With various of Claude Lorraine's pseudo-classic pictures, he was also familiar; and in his visits to the British Museum he had not spent all his time with the Elgin Marbles, there was, as Sir Sidney Colvin points out, the Townley collection, and others as well. Granted all these things, they are the merest spark of a match to flash the eager fire of his imagination. In no other poem that Keats wrote do we see his imagination more actively at work, or more perfectly master of its own expression. The poem is well-nigh flawless from beginning to end. It is a picture, an experience, and a creed, all in one. It is the world without and the world within. The "delightful forwardness" of the season is quite as much of a "source" as any of those we have been

[1] Colvin.

considering. The "happy, happy boughs," the "more happy, happy love," were with him daily, as was also the consciousness that these things do not last forever. Where else does his imagination give us a picture with such economy of detail as in his lines about the little town? What a lightning stroke of genius to depict it only to empty it, leaving it solitary in the morning sun, and, by a swift transition from gay to grave, evoking its eternal desolation. Gay and grave, that is it — Keats tuned to his highest pitch of evocative creation, burning with so clear and white an emotion that all his senses, all his thoughts and beliefs, fuse together into a presentation which is at once firm and infinitely moving, just, but wistfully disillusioned, cordially frank, yet very nearly perfectly concealed. The poem is a magnificent example of joy through resignation, for Keats had looked with ecstasy and anguish at life, at love, at art, and had learnt to submit to immutable law, to grant the necessity of his school of Soul-making, perchance, indeed, to find it good. Even if he had never heard of it, he had accepted Leonardo da Vinci's phrase:

"Cosa bella mortal passa e non d'arte."

I think that when Keats wrote the *Grecian Urn* he was at the very zenith of his development, more entirely single, whole, and undivided, more completely master of his qualities, all of them, than ever before or ever again. Not that he did not write superb poetry after this, but that his later work was produced in conflict, the conflict of his genius warring against outward conditions. He transcended them by the very act of composition, yet in doing so was forced to leave his everyday self behind. The perfection of the *Grecian Urn* sprang from just the fact that it was written by all his many selves working together in the complete harmony of absolute concord.

What happened to alter his mood, we shall never know. Keats, being himself, was always more or less prone to a

consciousness of the reverse of any happiness. There is a tale of ancient China wherein is described a mirror on the back of which was carved an image of a crane, the emblem of age and fate. This mirror was fashioned in such a manner that any one looking into it would see, not only his own face, but the shadow of the bird behind hovering dimly like an omen. Keats's joys too often presented themselves to him clouded by the shadow of a brooding fate. Possibly the month-long solace of a comprehending unity of ideas with Fanny Brawne had been marred by some incident or word. Certain it is that, whatever the reason, Keats's placidity broke down, not enough to debar him from writing, but sufficiently to strike a sharp note of bitterness through his work.

The order of the next three odes is by no means positive, and I do not offer it as such. I adopt the order I follow merely on account of probabilities, because it seems to fit best with the facts as we know them. From the third until the thirteenth of May there are no letters; from that time until the end of the month there are two to his sister Fanny, but they contain nothing pertinent.[1] On the ninth of June, he wrote to Miss Jeffrey that he had been "very idle lately," and a letter to the same lady on the thirty-first of May shows him in the sad mood which marks all these odes. It seems to me that this sadness ran a definite course, beginning with irony and violence, changing gradually to a passive melancholy, and ending with exhaustion. In that belief, I have determined the order in which I deal with the odes. Of course, I may be wrong.

Perhaps to speak of the *Ode on Melancholy* as being written in a mood of irony and violence may seem a bit extreme, particularly as the one really violent stanza, that which originally began the poem, was rejected in favour of the present opening. This is a subdued violence, no doubt, but violence nevertheless. Seek not for melancholy in melancholy things, cries the poet. If sorrow craves

[1] There is also a short note to Haslam telling of the receipt of a letter from George.

company, it is not in the contemplation of sad things that it will find it. No indeed, the grand paradox, the profound irony, of grief is to know itself partnered always with those very objects most proper to give pleasure. There is more misery for the unhappy in a rose, the iridescent hues of a wave breaking on shingle, a mass of full-blown peonies, than in all the traditionally sorrowful things that imagination can summon. Grief abides forever in beauty to the sentient man, that is the theme of the poem. It is the direct antithesis of Keats's attitude in the *Grecian Urn*, where the realization of the eternal quality of art binds and heals the bitter wounds incident upon mere living.

Irony and pain are in these lines:

> "Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
> Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
> And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes."

Such behaviour could only be possible to the shallow and disillusioned, as Keats knew right well. Such counsel to himself was the height of sarcasm, rending the heart from which it sprang. For the lady herself is mortal, and like all mortals must die. The thought of love is inextricably woven with the thought of death, and no wave of the eternal peace forever enshrouding the calm majesty of great art can touch his feverish resistance to the savage cruelty of this knowledge. Utterly vanished and gone is the chastened admission of the universe which produced the *Grecian Urn* and filled it with delicate, sober, and satisfying beauty.

The third, and final, stanza of the *Ode on Melancholy* is an almost angry denial of the attitude taken in stanzas three and five of the *Grecian Urn*. This positive answer to the stand taken in these stanzas of the *Grecian Urn* seems so evidently intentional that it is largely upon it that I base my belief in the priority of that poem. To make my point clear, I will quote the stanza in question:

"She dwells with Beauty — Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung."

The *Ode on Melancholy* seems so little literary and so markedly autobiographical that I find the suggestions as to its possible origins very much out of place. Suppose that Keats had been feeding his wounded sensibilities on the splendid brutalities of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, postulates and illustrative anecdotes of the Burton type may easily have chimed with certain moods, but scarcely with the one embodied here. Granted that Keats was familiar with Fletcher's *Nice Valour*, and its lines lauding melancholy and calling it by the fond name of "sweetest melancholy," does anything in Keats's ode resemble them? I think not. Let us, then, seek no farther for the source of the poem than a state of mind with which we, who have followed Keats for so long with a minute curiosity, must by now be sufficiently familiar. Keats did not find his paradox in Burton, Fletcher, or any other of his forerunners, but in the amazed and disgusted perusal of his own heart.

The *Ode on Melancholy* is not nearly as good a poem as the *Grecian Urn*, nor should we expect it to be so under the circumstances. If his sad mood were not strong enough to stop his writing entirely, it was at least strong enough to hamper it. Nevertheless there are fine lines and passages in the poem, and Keats and his friends were abundantly right to publish it in the *Lamia* volume. The wisdom of including the *Psyche*, on the other hand, is decidedly open to question.

Supposing my theory as to the progress and duration of Keats's despondent mood to be correct, there is nothing surprising in the fact that his next ode, the *Nightingale*, should be among his most perfect poems. He was still unhappy, but the poignance of the feeling was so far blunted as to leave his imagination free to take possession of his faculties for a space and do with them what it would.

If the *Grecian Urn* is a practically flawless example of clear, unvexed, wide-eyed beauty, the *Ode to a Nightingale* is a no less perfect presentation of absolute magic, a magic shimmering over profound depths of meaning and sensation. The overtones in the *Grecian Urn* are slight, the surface of the poem has an unrippled clarity about it which needs no more troubled music, no undershining reflections, to enhance its effect. The *Nightingale*, on the other hand, is strung and laced with strange, fantastic harmonies, with dissonances resolving faintly in the travelling air; it is fraught of foam and glancing shadows, of hints of mutability beyond the conscious ken. The *Grecian Urn* touches us to delight and admiration; the *Nightingale* stirs our hearts, grieves and satisfies them, and lingers on as a half-remembered echo of ourselves. The whole approach to the two poems is entirely different. Matthew Arnold, in his essay *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, has noted this difference of approach and commented upon it. The "little town" stanza in the *Grecian Urn* he calls "as Greek as a thing from Homer or Theocritus; it is compared with the eye on the object, a radiancy and light clearness being added," and again: "Keats passes at will from the Greek power to that power which, as I say, is Celtic; from his: —

> 'What little town by river or seashore' —

to his: —

> 'White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
> Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves'

or his: —

> '. . . magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn —'

in which the very same note is struck as in those extracts which I quoted from Celtic romance, and struck with authentic and unmistakable power."

To me, this "little town" stanza is not so much Greek as Japanese. The Greek presentation is simple, single, clear, but it is not quite this simplicity or clarity. What this stanza seems to me to resemble most closely are the Japanese colour prints of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I have already pointed out Keats's likeness in certain passages to these prints,[1] here is another example. If it be objected that Keats knew nothing of Japan or Japanese art, let it be remembered that neither did he know anything of Greek literature in the original, and the translations of it in his day were about as far from Greek in feeling as can be imagined. Keats's poetic instinct was exceedingly delicate and capable of apprehending a variety of *nuances*. It was no effort for his genius to go from the clear, unornamented, carefully outlined type of poetry represented in the "little town" stanza of the *Grecian Urn*, to the richly embroidered and fulminatingly coloured type of the *Nightingale*. A volume might be written tracing the varieties of style, attack, and presentation employed by Keats in his poems. I can do no more than hint of them here.

The story of the genesis of the *Ode to a Nightingale* was told by Brown to Lord Houghton. I give it in Brown's words:

> "In the spring of 1819 a nightingale had built her nest near my house. Keats felt a tranquil and continual joy in her song; and one morning he took his chair from the breakfast table to the grass-plot under a plum-tree, where

[1] See Vol. II, p. 41.

> he sat for two or three hours. When he came into the house, I perceived he had some scraps of paper in his hand, and these he was quietly thrusting behind some books."

Brown goes on to say that the scraps were "four or five in number" and that the writing was "not well legible" so that "it was difficult to arrange the stanzas," but that, with Keats's aid, he finally did so. Brown was speaking from memory twenty years after the event, and in some details he was wrong. The poem was not written on four or five scraps of paper, but on two half sheets.[1] Far from being "not well legible," the manuscript is extraordinarily clearly written, and the corrections, which are few, are very easily deciphered. Even the proper arrangement of the stanzas is not hard to discover after a first moment of confusion. On the top of one of his half sheets, Keats wrote three words of what seems to have been an abandoned beginning to the poem, then he turned the sheet over and upside down, started properly with a title, and wrote straight on to the end of the page. He then took another sheet and wrote on to the end of that page, after which he went back to the verso of page one, but from the opposite end to the false beginning. He finished on the verso of page two.

Notwithstanding the fact that Brown's memory played him false in these small particulars, his tale as a whole need not be doubted. The crumpled condition of the draft, attested to by Sir Sidney Colvin,[2] is a sufficient proof of Brown's general accuracy. On this point, Sir Sidney says: "These crushings and tearings . . . are quite of a kind to confirm Brown's statement about Keats having thrust the leaves away carelessly at the back of a bookshelf." What one wonders at is why neither Brown nor Lord Houghton

[1] See facsimile of the first draft, now in the Crewe Collection, reproduced in the *Keats Memorial Volume*, compiled by Dr. George C. Wilkinson, 1921.

[2] *A Morning's Work in a Hampstead Garden*, by Sir Sidney Colvin, *Monthly Review*, March, 1903; reprinted in *Keats Memorial Volume*, 1921.

had access to this original draft, which was in the possession of the Reynolds family, where it remained, passing apparently from Reynolds to his sister, Mrs. Green, and from her to her sons, until, after the death of the surviving brother in 1900, it was sold at auction in 1903. Reynolds must have forgotten its existence, as he made Lord Houghton free of everything he knew himself to possess.

This has been a long digression, let us get back at once to Keats, sitting under the plum-tree in the double garden on a May morning, writing his ode.

That the full tide of his melancholy mood has abated a little, we can see by the literary and imaginative quality of the poem throughout. Sad though his mood still is, he can once more take pleasure in the act of creation. The man who conjured up the vivid midnight scene of stanzas four and five is not so miserable that he cannot enjoy the play of fancy. The very act of evoking such images brought him a momentary surcease of pain. Leigh Hunt understood this very well, perhaps it takes a poet to do so. In his review of the *Lamia* volume, published the following year, he says of this ode: "There is that mixture in it of real melancholy and imaginary relief, which poetry alone presents us in her 'charmed cup,'" and adds: "A poet finds refreshment in his imaginary wine, as other men do in their real."

The poem begins:

> "My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
> My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
> Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
> One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk."

A "drowsy numbness." The first poignance of his sad mood has passed, he is weary with grief, so weary that he would fain flee it a moment if so he may. And almost immediately he does, the bird-song carries his thoughts to Summer delights and he is only too willing to have them go.

"Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!"

These things, in the mere evoking of them, bring a measure of happiness. He longs to drink of "a beaker full of the warm South," and so drinking "leave the world unseen," for even while conjuring up his lovely Summer images, because of them indeed, the thought of death haunts him. It is the old story of the *Ode on Melancholy*, the most beautiful things are by contrast the most painful. The third stanza is fraught with pain. He remembers only too well the many griefs which even his short life has known, and chief among them the constant underlying agony of Tom's death. It is the memory of poor Tom which gave him the line:

"Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies."

The last two lines of this stanza are an echo of the last half of the third stanza of the *Grecian Urn* and the first part of the last stanza of the *Ode on Melancholy*, but how differently he touches the theme here. The tone of these lines is infinitely more sensitive than that of the corresponding passages in either of the other odes. More sensitive and far more moving. This is the very intimacy of grief made manifest. There is no anger here, there is only the plain statement of unalterable and anguish-laden fact. But once more his attention is caught by the bird-song, and, listening to it, he forgets himself for a moment, only for a moment, the duration of two stanzas. The thought of death returns, he longs to "cease upon the midnight with no pain." Curiously enough, he had made use of this same expression in the sonnet of mid-March, *Why did I laugh to-night?* In the sonnet, he had said:

"Yet would I on this very midnight cease."

It was a characteristic habit with Keats to duplicate his expressions. A diligent student can find many parallels

between one poem and another. I note this here merely as an example of a rather odd custom, and because I have passed over many others in silence.

Stanza seven has been the cause of much foolish chatter. In calling the nightingale "immortal bird" and contrasting its eternity of life with individual man's short existence, any one with a spark of imaginative or poetical feeling realizes at once that Keats is not referring to the particular nightingale singing at that instant, but to the species nightingale. When Keats says:

> "The voice I hear this passing night was heard
> In ancient days by emperor and clown"

he means, of course, that the song of the nightingale was the same to the ancients as to him. I should not stoop to such a primer-like explanation, had not so eminent a scholar and poet as Dr. Robert Bridges declared the idea of this passage to be "fanciful or superficial — man being as immortal as the bird in every sense but that of sameness, which is assumed and does not satisfy."[1]

The last lines of this stanza are, I think, the most beautiful in the poem. I quote them for pure love of them, to gladden my heart and I hope those of my readers:

> "Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
> Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
> She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
> The same that oft-times hath
> Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."

It is interesting to observe that in the first draft Keats wrote "fairy," and the reading "faery" was not arrived at until the publication of the poem in the *Lamia* volume. The change of the spelling entirely alters the atmosphere, bringing to it some of the weird, unearthly loveliness

[1] *John Keats. A Critical Essay*, by Robert Bridges. 1895.

which characterizes *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*. Keats does not wish to suggest "fairy-land," the country of little elves dancing on fairy rings in the meadows, but the faery-land of old romance, of King Arthur and *Palmerin*.

The change from "fairy" to "faery" was a change made long after the writing of the poem. But two other corrections in the last two lines appear in the draft. Originally the "magic casements" were simply "the wide casements," and the sea was "keelless," not "perilous." Of course, we do not know whether these changes were made while Keats was still under the plum-tree, or later. Professor Lowes has pointed out to me three passages in Diodorus[1] which bear a singular likeness to a part of these last two lines. In the third chapter of Book III, there is an account of the Arabian gulf, where we are told that "by the continual dashing of the floods . . . it foams terribly." Three paragraphs after this, we read: "The waves dashing against these huge rocks, mount up in a curl, and foam to admiration." And the next sentence but one begins: "Next adjoining to this perilous sea."

So far as we know, Keats had not been reading Diodorus lately. But we really know very little about it. Keats was an omnivorous reader, and may very well have been dipping into his old love again. I should take little stock in the foaming of the waves if they were not so closely connected with the "perilous sea." "Perilous seas" is infinitely better than "keelless seas"; whether Keats owes the expression to a recollection of Diodorus or not, it was a happy chance of memory or inspiration which gave it to him. But this passage from the old historian, picturesque and excellent though it is, is plain matter of fact. There is no hint here of "magic casements" or "faery lands forlorn." There is, in short, nothing of the atmosphere of Keats's lines to be found in the old Sicilian. For that atmosphere, I think we

[1] See Vol. I, p. 425.

must turn back to *Palmerin*. In the third volume of that chronicle, it is related how the knight of the Savage Man, being taken a prisoner by an emissary of the giantess Colambar, was conveyed in a ship to the "Profound Isle." On the way, the ship ran into a storm. Textually, there is nothing in the description of this storm to join it to these lines in the *Nightingale* ode, but inferentially there is a great deal. Colambar is an enchantress, which gives the necessary atmosphere at once, and if the waves do not "foam" verbally, they certainly do by implication, as witness these passages:

> "the weather was changed suddenly with a mighty tempest... So they drove along under bare poles, rather holding their death for certain than having any hope of life."

And a few pages before:

> "on the third day the wind arose so extreme and violent, that in the midst of winter it could not be more rigorous."

Now the "Profound Isle" was close to another island, the "Perilous Isle," which had long been in the possession of another enchantress and had been bewitched until Palmerin broke the spell. Palmerin embarked for this island on a stormy day, when the waves drove against the rocks "with a roaring which was heard afar off." The island itself was very rocky, with but one harbour. On the peak of it stood "a fair palace," which is described with great accuracy and much magnificence, and although the view from it is not mentioned, "glass windows of marvellous costliness" are, and the approach to it was through a beautiful wood which may well have harboured innumerable nightingales. Some of this description is taken from much earlier in the book, but it all refers to the "Perilous Isle." I cannot help thinking that, although the exact expression "perilous seas" may be an echo of Diodorus, the whole passage, atmosphere and all, owes its existence

to the storm and the description of the palace of the sorceress Urganda in *Palmerin of England*, particularly as her successor in the magic art, the enchantress Eutropa, used the island and palace to lure wandering knights to their doom, hence the connotation of "forlorn."

The word "forlorn" brought Keats back to himself:

> "Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
> To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
> Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
> As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
> Adieu! Adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
> Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
> Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
> In the next valley-glades:
> Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
> Fled is that music: — Do I wake or sleep?"

Excellent, excellent ending! Without abating a jot of the personal implication, Keats keeps his half-real, half fantastic, atmosphere throughout. The sense of dreaming enwraps the reader with the very first line of the poem and is never once absent, the concluding lines augmenting it to the softest and vaguest of minor climaxes.

The *Ode to a Nightingale* is a marvel of poetic construction. The way Keats manages his repeated words is an extreme example of his mastery of musical effect. All through his imaginative stanzas, the tone of the opening lines of the poem sounds as an organ-point beneath what he is actually saying, and the reiteration of his original note, muffled, distant, yet perfectly clear, in the final stanza, is superb. The student of poetic architectonics can find no better primer to his hand than the three odes: the *Grecian Urn*, the *Nightingale* and *To Autumn*; and, for mere technique, a detailed examination of the variation of the whereabouts of the short line, or the lack of it, in all six odes is a liberal education. For structural, technical, musical, and thematic handling these odes are ex-

traordinarily rich in suggestion and are well worth the closest study.

It is difficult to determine, nor is it in the least necessary, whether the *Grecian Urn* or the *Nightingale* is the finer; it is enough that both together are so variously and indisputably fine. Only *To Autumn* can rank with them. They leave the other three odes of this Spring so far behind that in that fact alone is matter for much pondering on the singular inequality of Keats's production at any, and all, times throughout his life. If his artistic level rose steadily during his life, as it did, nevertheless, at any given moment, he was capable of writing poems far below the highest range of that particular moment. No poet is always at his best, but few are so consistently unequal as Keats never ceased to be.

Haydon, writing in April, 1821, to Miss Mitford[1] has a tale to tell of the *Ode to a Nightingale*. He says:

> "as we were one evening walking in the Kilburn meadows he repeated it to me, before he put it to paper, in a low, tremulous undertone which affected me extremely."

Haydon was mistaken as to Keats not having written out the poem at the time of his reciting it during the walk in the Kilburn meadows. What was probably the case was that he told Haydon he had no fair copy; and the reason for his saying this we can surmise by deduction. Haydon was the man behind the throne of a magazine called *Annals of the Fine Arts*, edited by a certain James Elmes. This Elmes was a henchman and valiant ally of Haydon's, backing him up in all his quarrels and more than eager to take his cue in everything. It seems extremely likely that when Keats repeated the *Ode to a Nightingale* to him, Haydon at once suggested the publication of the poem in the *Annals*, and that Keats replied that he should have to

[1] *Benjamin Robert Haydon: Correspondence and Table-Talk.* With a Memoir by his son, Frederick Wordsworth Haydon.

copy it out before sending it to Elmes. He did send it to Elmes, on Monday, June fourteenth,[1] and it duly appeared in the number of the magazine for July, 1819, signed, not with Keats's name, but with a dagger. In this dagger, we see the dirty work of the reviews. Keats had no mind to send the *Ode to a Nightingale* into the world to do battle against such a prejudice as he felt the dastardly reviews had saddled him with. The poem should at least have fair play. Hence the dagger, and hence that other pseudonym, *Caviar*, which he employed later on two occasions. It is interesting to note that the word "faery" was still "fairy" when the poem was printed in the *Annals*.

The last of the poems of this so fruitful Spring was — if, as I say, my reasoning be correct — the *Ode on Indolence*. By the time he wrote it, toward the end of May, it would seem, his long orgy of writing had tired him out. His sorrowful mood had worn away to a mere wistful essence of its first energy. From the title of the ode, I suppose some little time had elapsed between it and the *Nightingale*. He wrote to Miss Jeffrey on June ninth that he had "been very idle lately," so that it must have been written some time before that date, but he has this to say of this particular ode: "You will judge of my 1819 temper when I tell you that the thing I have most enjoyed this year has been writing an ode to Indolence." We see by this that the ode was still in his mind; and there is another sentence to prove it, for Keats tells his correspondent: "I hope I am a little more of a Philosopher than I was, consequently a little less of a versifying Pet-lamb." Now in the sixth stanza of the Ode on Indolence occur these lines:

> "For I would not be dieted with praise,
> A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce!"

These two identical metaphors are pretty good proof

[1] Buxton Forman dates this letter "June 12th," but apparently this is an error, as Keats told Haydon on June 17th that he had sent the poem to Elmes "on Monday," and Monday was the 14th.

that the ode was the last thing he had written, I think, but there is a more convincing one in the ode itself. Keats states the season perfectly clearly in two separate stanzas of the poem, and it is obvious that he is not inventing a fictitious time or place, as in the midnight stanzas in the *Nightingale*. This poem is absolutely autobiographical and makes no attempt to be otherwise, so that what he says of his environment may be taken as exact fact. These are the lines in question:

> "... Ripe was the drowsy hour;
> The blissful cloud of summer-indolence
> Benumb'd my eyes:
>
> The morn was clouded, but no shower fell,
> Tho' in her lids hung the sweet tears of May."

The *Ode on Indolence* is merely a poetic version of his Greek Vase image of mid-March.[1] He imagines three figures, a man and two women, passing by him "like figures on a marble urn." As each approaches, it turns toward him. Three times the figures pass him, and he knows the two women to be Love and that "maiden most unmeek" his "demon Poesy"; the man is Ambition. For a moment he longs to follow them, but finds himself inert and too content to lift his head "cool-bedded in the flowery grass." He admits that he still has

> "...visions for the night,
> And for the day faint visions there is store";

but for the moment he can only bid the phantoms to vanish, for nothing can rouse him, his only desire is to feel nothing.

This, of course, was pure fatigue, and the poem shows it. He was well-advised to exclude it from the *Lamia* volume.

[1] See Vol. II, p. 191.

Because of the obvious duplicate of idea between the *Ode on Indolence* and the March image, it has often been supposed that Keats must have written this ode some time in February or March. Sir Sidney Colvin was the first person to assign to it its proper date of May. He suggests that the languorous mood of March had returned. It evidently had, or one very much like it only a shade more sad, and the cause was the same in the latter case as in the former — sheer weariness. The reasons for this fatigue were very much the same also, except that, in May, we have an excess of work to add to the general quota of disappointment and difficult conditions. Notwithstanding all this, there is another thing which we must take into account: the poet's natural aptitude to retain in his mind a striking figure or idea for future use. When Keats first thought of personifying Love, Ambition, and Poetry by figures on a Greek vase, he was not in a mood to make use of them. Later, having done what he knew to be a considerable amount of good work and then suffered a short and most unwelcome pause, he set about hunting for a subject which should start him off again, and found his idea of two months before still waiting to be utilized. By this time, the idea (which he had liked and thought capable of possibilities from the moment of conceiving it) had taken on a more or less definite shape. Every writer is perfectly familiar with the phenomenon of unconscious creation. Henry James, in the Preface to his novel, *The American*,[1] describes this phenomenon so accurately that I will quote his description here:

> "I was charmed with my idea, which would take, however, much working out; and precisely because it had so much to give, I think, must I have dropped it into the deep well of unconscious cerebration: not without hope, doubtless, that it might eventually emerge from that reservoir, as one had already known the buried treasure to come to

[1] *The Novels and Tales of Henry James.* New York Edition. 1907.

> light, with a firm iridescent surface and a notable increase in weight."

Keats's idea, in this case, did not "come to light with a firm iridescent surface and a notable increase in weight" for the very excellent reason that he did not wait for it to come to light at all. He pulled it out of the shadowland of the unconscious because he wanted to write a poem and assure himself that the wave of creation was not spent. The result of this most unwise proceeding was a failure. *On Idolence* is much the poorest of his odes proper, as he knew very well. He may have enjoyed writing it, but I think his remarks on the subject to Miss Jeffrey smack rather more of a wilful desire to praise this feeble child of his brain than of any real belief in the quality of the ode itself, also probably he liked the main idea of the ode quite apart from its working out. Later, when it came to a question of publication, this ode, as we have seen, went into the discard.

With the *Ode on Indolence*, Keats's month of magnificent and intensive creation came to an abrupt end. The chief cause for this was that the quasi-peace which he had been enjoying was suddenly shattered to bits. This did not happen all at once; and to show the gradual advance of disagreeable circumstances, I must go back a little.

On the thirteenth of May, the long awaited letter from George arrived. The young couple had changed their plans, it seemed, and up to date had no remarkably good news to impart. The journey across country to Pittsburgh from Philadelphia, where they had landed, was a decidedly rough and unpleasant one if taken in the stage coaches of the place and period. To save his young wife the fatigue of such a trip, George had purchased a carriage and horses — a considerable expense for him — and the pair had travelled to Pittsburgh in this equipage. Arriving at Pittsburgh, they forwarded the horses to Cincinnati by land

and transferred themselves and their belongings to a keel-boat in which they floated for some six hundred miles down the Ohio River. For some reason, they stopped at Louisville, and here George changed his mind about going on to Birkbeck's settlement, deciding on someone's very poor advice to try his fortunes in a different way. Why they did not remain in Louisville, we do not know, but they did not; instead, they went on to Henderson, some hundred miles or so farther down the river. At Henderson, the young couple lodged in the same house with Audubon, the naturalist. Audubon seems to have persuaded George to buy shares in a boat which plied up and down the river with cargoes of various sorts. The boat was out on one of its trips at the time, and George appears to have invested his money without having seen it. Eventually he discovered that the boat had sunk and was a total loss. Rightly or wrongly, George Keats believed that Audubon had known that the boat was at the bottom of the river when he persuaded George to put his money into it.[1] All this information was not in the letter received on May thirteenth, only so much as declared George's intention of not going on to Birkbeck's settlement. One bit of really good news the letter did contain, George and his wife were both quite well. But if George's tidings were negative, with a leaning toward the good side, another piece of intelligence which Keats heard shortly afterwards was very much the reverse. The why of Keats's finding it out will take a little explanation.

Brown, as we already know, always let his half of Wentworth Place for the Summer. This habit of his made it imperative for Keats to look about for somewhere to spend the time of Brown's absence. There had been some idea of Keats and Brown passing the Summer in Brussels, but

[1] *The American Brother of John Keats*, by John Gilmer Speed, in *The Christian Union* for August 20, 1892. Also *Some Recollections of George Keats*, by James Freeman Clarke, in Buxton Forman's Library Edition.

the plan had been given up. As the time of Brown's departure drew near, Keats began to consider seriously what he should do. He could not face going back to his old Well Walk lodgings, the thought of Tom was too painfully insistent there. One wonders why no other lodgings at Hampstead appear to have been thought of, but nothing of the kind seems to have been considered, possibly for fear of hurting the Bentleys' feelings, who, Keats tells Miss Jeffrey, "have become friends of mine." Also his funds were at a very low ebb. By the end of May, Keats had come to see his immediate future as one of two alternatives. Either he would go as surgeon on an Indiaman, or he would retire to some cheap place in the country and continue to study and write. On the thirty-first of May, he wrote to Miss Jeffrey, asking her to inquire for a cheap lodging near Teignmouth; not in Teignmouth itself, on that point he is very clear, again, of course, on account of its connection with Tom. These alternatives he called "the choice of two poisons."

Miss Jeffrey answered promptly, strongly advising against the Indiaman, and suggesting the village of Bradley as a good place for Keats to play the studious hermit in. Keats loathed the idea of the Indiaman. It is probable that his only reason for contemplating it was to escape hiring himself out to a country or suburban practitioner, which would have entailed the detested shop. On the eighth of June, Rice went out to Hampstead to see him and propose their both going to the little village of Shanklin in the Isle of Wight. This meant sharing expenses, which was an item to Keats, and he liked Rice very much. The plan seemed a godsend and he accepted it. But before the moment to start came, things took a decided turn for the worse. By the fourteenth of June, his sore throat had come back. Of course we can instantly see how all the worry and trouble he had been undergoing would have had just this effect. His resistance was so reduced that all the

symptoms of his fatal disease were bound to be augmented forthwith. And this was not all.

Going on Wednesday, the sixteenth, to see Abbey, presumably to try and get some money for his approaching journey and stay at Shanklin, he was greeted by the miserable news that his aunt, Mrs. Midgely Jennings, dissatisfied with Abbey's administration of her mother-in-law's estate, very likely also erroneously thinking that it was in some way owing to Abbey's negligence that the original chancery suit still hung fire, had threatened to bring another suit in chancery at once. The effect of such a suit would be to tie up completely all the funds in Abbey's hands and leave Keats for an indefinite period absolutely penniless.

It is much to Keats's credit that he at once decided to seek a position with an apothecary. But here Brown stepped in. Brown, like Woodhouse, had implicit faith in Keats's genius and the certainty of his winning fame and being able to support himself if time were given him. He would not hear of the apothecary scheme. Keats must try the press again, and he must go to Shanklin with Rice and write in as much peace as this not too auspicious arrangement would allow. And Brown not only encouraged and counselled, he lent Keats money to go on with. This was generous of Brown, although one cannot help feeling that it would have been more generous to have given up the idea of renting his house and let Keats stay quietly on at Hampstead, where he had the comfort of being near Fanny Brawne. It is, of course, possible that Brown had already engaged with his Summer tenants; at any rate, whether he had or not, the idea of changing his plans does not seem to have entered into his calculations.

At this juncture, Keats asked Haydon to return some of the money which Keats had lent him. His letter told Haydon all the particulars of his situation very calmly and clearly. He did not ask for the return of the whole

loan, he merely asked for "some" money. But here Keats encountered Haydon's seamy side. Haydon's capacity for borrowing was inexhaustible, but he never paid his debts, and the debt to Keats was no exception. Keats never got back a single penny of his loan. This cut Keats to the quick, naturally. Writing to George in September, he has this to say of Haydon's behaviour:

> "he did not seem to care much about it, and let me go without my money with almost nonchalance, when he ought to have sold his drawings to supply me. I shall perhaps still be acquainted with him, but for friendship, that is at an end."

This, I think, to be in the main true. Keats eventually drifted back into some sort of a friendship with Haydon, but never into the close intimacy which had marked their early connection. He was too profoundly hurt, and Haydon had proved himself too unworthy. Bailey and Haydon, two friendships lost in a twelvemonth. A strange, pathetic, eventful twelvemonth it had been. Looking back to the previous June, Keats must have felt as though he were sojourning in another world. A very changed world indeed, for had not Abbey told him, along with the information about Mrs. Jennings, of a letter he had had from George announcing the birth of a daughter. Such an event, fortunate although Keats must have thought it in one way, was bound to increase George's difficulties considerably, and, closely bound together as the brothers were, what affected one affected both. Here was the shadow of a new responsibility for John, who had all he could cope with as it was. To add to his trials, he must now tear himself away from Fanny Brawne. It was a bitter struggle, but what else was to be done? If they were ever to marry, he must make some money, and everyone but Abbey seemed to be agreed that the best way for him to do so was by writing. It is to the honour of Fanny Brawne that she put no stumbling-

block in his way. She had much to bear during the next four months, but she never flinched. Keats knew better than his friends the quality of the girl to whom he was engaged. The day came, and Keats bade her good-bye, with what feelings can very well be imagined, and he and Rice set off for Shanklin.

CHAPTER XI

A TIDE AND ITS UNDERTOW

BEFORE leaving Hampstead, Keats seems in a measure to have set his house in order. Among other things, he returned various borrowed books, as we see by an undated letter to Dilke, erroneously attributed by someone to the following year.[1] Another thing he did was to send his picture to his sister Fanny. In his last letter to her before his departure, written on June sixteenth, he says:

> "I am very sorry to think I shall not be able to come to Walthamstow. The Head Mr. Severn did of me is now too dear, but here enclosed is a very capital Profile done by Mr. Brown."

The "Head" by Mr. Severn was the miniature exhibited that year at the Royal Academy Exhibition. Severn made several copies of it, one of which was at some time given to Fanny Brawne. The "capital Profile done by Mr. Brown" was undoubtedly a silhouette. A silhouette of Keats was discovered among Severn's papers, which it has been the custom to attribute to Severn, a fact that I have always held in very grave doubt. Indeed, I have long been convinced that the author of it was Brown, but it is only within the last few months that my belief has become a certainty. During the current year (1924), the Keats Memorial Association at Hampstead received a number of relics of the poet from the descendants of Charles Brown in New Zealand. Among them was another silhouette so like the first that there can be no doubt that they were done by the same hand. This second silhouette is known to have

[1] The letter is endorsed in pencil, "1820," but this is evidently a mistake. Unfortunately Buxton Forman has followed this misleading date in his editions.

been cut by Brown, and a drawing by him, also lately discovered, which I have used as a frontispiece to the second volume of this book, shows such similarity of treatment with both silhouettes that there is no longer any room for query on the subject. I have put the two silhouettes side by side on one page in order that they may be compared. They were cut on different days, that is clear, and represent Keats in different moods. The first is the more alert; the second, the more appealing. I am inclined to think that the first was done earlier than the other, possibly before Tom's death, or, if not so soon as that, then at some time during the Winter when Keats was feeling particularly well; the second I believe to represent him just before going to Shanklin, and was probably the one sent to Fanny Keats. Silhouettes can be easily duplicated by the simple means of tracing the outline of the original picture on the white side of another sheet of silhouette paper, so that because Severn, or Fanny Keats, had a copy, is no proof that replicas may not have existed. From Brown's having carefully preserved the second silhouette, I suppose it to have been the one which he preferred. To my mind, these silhouettes are the most attractive, and the most authentic, likenesses of Keats which have come down to us. The life mask is absolutely accurate, of course, but in looking at it we have to make some allowance for the weight of the plaster on the more mobile parts of the features. The lips, for instance, give the impression of being drawn back and depressed.

It was on Sunday, June twenty-seventh, that Keats and Rice left London by the Portsmouth coach. They evidently went down by day, as Keats wrote his sister on July sixth:

> "I was on the Portsmouth Coach the Sunday before last in that heavy shower — and I may say that I went to Portsmouth by water — I got a little cold, and as it always flies to my throat I am a little out of sorts that way."

This was not the first time that Keats had been on the



SILHOUETTE OF KEATS. ATTRIBUTED TO SEVERN, BUT PROBABLY BY BROWN



SILHOUETTE OF KEATS BY BROWN
From the original in the possession of the

top of a coach in a rain-storm. But this time the shower seems to have caught him en route. We will hope that he had grown at least wise enough not to risk starting outside in a rain, as he had done when he went to Teignmouth the year before. The reason for the day coach is obvious; the expense was less. There were many day coaches from London to Portsmouth, but the slowest, and therefore, without doubt, the cheapest, was the "Regulator," which left the Angel Inn, St. Clement's, Strand, at eight in the morning. Keats's altered finances stand very clearly revealed by this choice of coach; hitherto he seems to have travelled either by the mail or by some crack coach. That I am right as to his going down by the most inexpensive means is shown by the fact that "some common French people but very well behaved" were among his fellow passengers. The "Regulator" deposited its travellers at the George Inn, Portsmouth, at seven o'clock in the evening. It is only some seven miles from Portsmouth to Ryde, but it is scarcely likely that the "Regulator" connected with a packet as did the Royal Mail. It was possible to procure a wherry at any hour, but it is extremely improbable that our two young men went to the expense of hiring one. No, I think they passed that night at the George and crossed over to the Isle of Wight by the first public packet the next morning. This would date their arrival at Shanklin as being on Monday, June twenty-eighth.

The chief thing in Keats's mind on reaching his destination was homesickness. He was perfectly miserable. There was no post from Shanklin, letters had to trust to carrier's carts, or some other means even more casual, for conveyance to the post town of Newport, nine miles away by road. On Tuesday night Keats wrote Fanny Brawne so agonized a letter that, the convenient carrier not being forthcoming on Wednesday, he thought better of his vehemence and tore it up. He tells the story in another letter to Miss Brawne, written on Thursday morning:

"I am glad I had not an opportunity of sending off a Letter which I wrote for you on Tuesday night — 'Twas too much like one out of Ro[u]sseau's Heloise. I am more reasonable this morning. The morning is the only proper time for me to write to a beautiful Girl whom I love so much: for at night, when the lonely day has closed, and the lonely, silent, unmusical Chamber is waiting to receive me as into a Sepulchre, then believe me my passion gets entirely the sway, then I would not have you see those R[h]apsodies which I once thought it impossible I should ever give way to, and which I have often laughed at in another, for fear you should [think me][1] either too unhappy or a little mad."

Later in the letter, he says:

"I know not how to express my devotion to so fair a form: I want a brighter word than bright, a fairer word than fair... But however selfish I may feel, I am sure I could never act selfishly: as I told you a day or two before I left Hampstead, I will never return to London if my Fate does not turn up Pam[2] or at least a Court-card."

He even envisages the possibility of her marrying someone else. And why not, when his own prospects seemed to put marriage on the other side of beyond? If, he tells her, he thought that she felt for him what he does for her,

"I do not think I could restrain myself from seeing you again tomorrow for the delight of one embrace. But no — I must live upon hope and Chance."

It was a pretty awful situation truly, to have all one's hopes of the future depend upon the working of an imagination sorely hampered by untoward circumstance. And he was feeling far from well, and Rice was very poorly indeed. They were in a lovely place, to be sure:

[1] These words are missing in the original, they were interpolated by Buxton Forman.

[2] Pam is the knave of clubs in the game of loo.

> "Our window looks over house-tops and Cliffs onto the Sea, so that when the Ships sail past the Cottage chimnies you may take them for weathercocks. We have Hill and Dale, forest and Mead, and plenty of lobsters."

So he writes to his sister, bravely keeping his anxieties out of his letter.

The truth is that neither place nor companion were of Keats's choosing, and neither was suited to his state of mind or health. It is one thing to like a man and enjoy his companionship for an hour or a day, and quite another to find that same man sympathetic in the rôle of daily familiar. Rice was a thoroughly good fellow, but he was ailing himself, and contact with illness of any sort was of all things the most undesirable for Keats just then. Depressed as he was, he needed to be surrounded with cheerfulness and normality, and these were just the things which Rice could not give him. What was the matter with Rice, no one says, but he seems to have been subject to sick spells of more or less duration, and he was suffering from one of these spells at Shanklin apparently. Keats speaks of him as "Poor Rice" and admits that "his illness makes him rather a melancholy companion." Writing to Dilke a month later, when Rice had left Shanklin, Keats is more explicit. This is how he sums up the situation, then happily over:

> "Rice and I passed rather a dull time of it. I hope he will not regret coming with me. He was unwell, and I was not in very good health: and I am afraid we made each other worse by acting upon each other's spirits. We would grow as melancholy as need be. I confess I cannot bear a sick person in a House, especially alone — it weighs upon me day and night."

Rice, however, had a certain *bonhomie*; we have already seen how well he got on with the Devonshire barmaids,[1] and here at Shanklin he developed a knack of

[1] See Vol. I, p. 610.

chatting with the village people. This was a knack which Keats was conspicuously without. Apropos of this, Keats tells his sister of Rice:

> "He has a greater tact in speaking to people of the village than I have, and in those matters is a great amusement as well as a good friend to me."

Keats had come down to the Isle of Wight to work, and work he must, willy-nilly. How long he took to get at it, there is no means of telling, but by Thursday, July eighth, he was in full swing, as we see by a letter to Fanny Brawne of that date. There is much in this letter of prime importance. It shows us a great deal of Fanny Brawne's attitude, particularly her natural resentment at Keats's constant harping upon her beauty, as if that were the part of her that chiefly mattered; it shows much of the reason for Keats's failure as a lover, the reason why he suffered as he did, the misfortune of his temperament which, under the scourge of his illness, made the purely physical side of love of such vast importance to him; it shows also his belief, which was probably based on a correct diagnosis, that had it been possible for him and Miss Brawne to be married at once most of his morbid convulsions and imaginings would have faded away. I will quote the letter somewhat fully:

> "All my thoughts, my unhappiest days and nights, have I find not at all cured me of my love of Beauty, but made it so intense that I am miserable that you are not with me: or rather breathe in that dull sort of patience that cannot be called Life. I never knew before, what such a love as you have made me feel, was; I did not believe in it; my Fancy was afraid of it, lest it should burn me up. But if you will fully love me, though there may be some fire, 'twill not be more than we can bear when moistened and bedewed with Pleasures . . . Why may I not speak of your Beauty, since without that I could never have lov'd you? — I cannot conceive any beginning of such love as I have for you but Beauty. There may be a sort of love for which,

without the least sneer at it, I have the highest respect and can admire it in others: but it has not the richness, the bloom, the full form, the enchantment of love after my own heart. So let me speak of your Beauty, though to my own endangering; if you could be so cruel to me as to try elsewhere its Power. You say you are afraid I shall think you do not love me — in saying this you make me ache the more to be near you. I am at diligent use of my faculties here, I do not pass a day without sprawling some blank verse or tagging some rhymes; and here I must confess, that (since I am on that subject) I love you the more in that I believe you have liked me for my own sake and nothing else. I have met with women whom I really think would like to be married to a Poem and to be given away by a novel."

Fanny Brawne loved him for his own sake most certainly, loved him through fair weather and foul, and was even so understanding as not to be jealous of his work. And this work, this sprawled blank verse and tagged rhymes, what was it in this second week of July, 1819? This is not a little difficult to say. In a mutilated letter of July twelfth to Reynolds, Keats writes:

"You will be glad to hear, under my own hand (though Rice says we are like Sauntering Jack and Idle Joe), how diligent I have been, and am being. I have finished the Act, and in the interval of beginning the 2nd have proceeded pretty well with Lamia, finishing the 1st part, which consists of about four hundred lines."

The act here referred to has always been supposed to be the first act of *Otho the Great*, but there is a little hitch in connection with that supposition. What is puzzling about this reference is that Brown distinctly told Lord Houghton that it was at Shanklin that Keats "undertook" the writing of *Otho the Great* in collaboration with him, and the method of this collaboration as detailed by Brown (I shall quote Brown's words in a moment) makes Brown's pres-

ence at the time of writing a necessity. Now Brown does not seem to have arrived at Shanklin until later in the month. Keats first mentions him in a letter to Fanny Brawne, written on Sunday, July twenty-fifth, and this mention would seem to place his arrival as having taken place toward the end of the preceding week. Of course, Brown, in recollection, may have confused a later proceeding with an earlier. It may be that the plan of writing *Otho* had been broached before Keats left Hampstead, and the first two acts sketched out for Keats to work upon. This would seem a possible explanation of the puzzle were it not that it leaves out of account entirely the way in which the two friends worked; also there is another much more plausible one, the basis for which has only just come to light. To understand its importance, I must preface the discussion of it a little.

Reynolds, who, notwithstanding his position as a budding solicitor, had not quite given up his pen, had lately been induced to try his hand at a musical farce. This farce, which bore the singular title of *One, Two, Three, Four, Five; By Advertisement*, was written for a young actor named John Reeve whose chief asset was a marked talent for mimicry. The farce was produced at the English Opera House on July seventeenth, 1819. It enjoyed quite a success, and was popular enough to be published as one of the series of printed plays known as *Cumberland's British Theatre*. Woodhouse speaks of it to Taylor, in a letter[1] which seems to have been written in August, as follows:

> "I have just bought his "One two three four Five" and paid just that number of pence for it plus 3. It lies on my table uncut; If I had read it I would send it you: but your curiosity can keep . . . It shall go in the next parcel."

Again he writes, under the date of September seventh:[2]

[1] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection. [2] *Ibid.*

> "I also send (if Hessey forwards it, which I have injoined him to do) Reynolds's One, two 3.4.5. Such a thing must be judged of, not as a literary production, but, by your golden rule, according to the purpose of the Author . . . How triumphantly it succeeded, I told you when I went in my theatro-critical capacity to see it. There is much of Reynolds's kind of wit, half pun & half humour in it."

Now in the Woodhouse Book in the Morgan Library there is a most extraordinary fragment. It is written on all four sides of a sheet of octavo paper and is not in Keats's handwriting. I am not prepared to say in whose writing it is without more study than I have yet been able to accord it, but this is of little moment, since it seems certain that it is merely a copy. Woodhouse's statement that all the poems in his book were by Keats unless otherwise labelled leaves little room for doubt on this score; and, as a matter of fact, nothing in the volume is in Keats's hand, all the poems and fragments are copies by someone or other. This particular fragment is an excerpt from a play, and copied in a hurry. It begins in the middle of a scene, and is very difficult to read, as the characters speaking are only occasionally indicated, and there is no punctuation to speak of, and no spacing between speeches. I have given this fragment at the end of this book,[1] together with an emendated version, spaced and punctuated by me. The scene is mostly written in blank verse, but there is a little song in one place which is obviously intended to be actually sung to music. I am bound to admit that the scene does not in any way remind one of Keats, but it does very forcibly remind one of Reynolds's musical farce, and might easily have been written by Keats in an endeavour to write something pleasing to the popular taste. Reynolds's farce is in prose, occasionally dropping into blank verse, and with several interpolated songs; there is no prose in

[1] See Appendix B.

the fragment, nevertheless the construction of the scene and the included song, together with the general tenor of the whole, link the two pieces together as belonging to a *genre*. Keats had doubtless read Reynolds's farce before leaving London, and he was probably as partial to "Reynolds's kind of wit" as was Woodhouse. Scenting in *One, Two, Three, Four, Five* a popular success, it may well have occurred to him that one way of raising the wind would be to do something similar, and hence this attempt in a field quite new to him. The characters and plot of this fragment closely follow a pattern very familiar to readers of early nineteenth century farces. The scene deals with a stock situation, but the persons of the play, although again they are the quite usual *dramatis personæ* of innumerable plays of the type, have a distinct liveliness and humour, and give the fragment sufficient interest to leave us speculating on what was to come. In view of all this, I cannot help thinking that the puzzle in the letter to Reynolds finds in this fragment its answer. Probably Keats and Reynolds had talked over the likelihood of Keats's being able to follow in his friend's footsteps and produce an actable farce, hence Keats's assurance that he had done one act of it. I do not say that I have proved this to be the case; I merely say that here is an explanation which should, at least, be considered.

Keats was turning a bold face to his difficulties certainly. He had been at Shanklin just two weeks and had completed an act of something, and four hundred lines of *Lamia*. More than this, he knew what he was doing, and where it might lead and where not. He tells Reynolds:

> "I have great hopes of success, because I make use of my judgement more deliberately than I have yet done; but in case of failure with the world, I shall find my content... however I should like to enjoy what the competencies of life procure, I am in no wise dashed at a different prospect. I have spent too many thoughtful days and moralized

through too many nights for that, and fruitless would they be indeed, if they did not by degrees make me look upon the affairs of the world with a healthy deliberation. I have of late been moulting: not for fresh feathers and wings: they are gone, and in their stead I hope to have a pair of sublunary legs. I have altered, not from a Chrysalis into a butterfly, but the contrary; having two little loopholes, whence I may look out into the stage of the world: and that world on our coming here I almost forgot. The first time I sat down to write, I could scarcely believe in the necessity for so doing. It struck me as a great oddity. Yet the very corn which is now so beautiful, as if it had only took to ripening yesterday, is for the market; so, why should I be delicate?"

To write with the conscious intention of selling what he was writing as a chief means of support, was new to Keats, and the idea irked him a little. So much we can plainly see, but also we can notice how Keats, in a sort of wonder, found that the mature artist may cozen his muse to obey his beck and call to a considerable extent. *Otho*, his main pot-boiler, was a failure, it is true, but this was for several reasons besides the one of being written to order; while *Lamia* was a brilliant success. It must have given him a great deal of satisfaction to find himself fairly at work, started upon the enormous task of pushing away the clouds which hung over him by doing something with a direct bearing upon his destiny. Every step on the road brought him, by just so much, nearer to marriage with Fanny Brawne.

But Keats reckoned without his health. Three days more, and he was in an "irritable state of health." And the irritation, as was usual with him, led to languor. On Thursday, July fifteenth, he confessed to Fanny Brawne, who seems to have written him a consoling letter:

"You must have found out by this time I am a little given to bode ill like the raven; it is my misfortune not my

> fault; it has proceeded from the general tenor of the circumstances of my life, and rendered every event suspicious."

He tells her that when he thinks that he will not see her "the next day, or the next — it takes on the appearance of impossibility and eternity"; he gives himself a month more and then he will see her, although, he adds, "after having once more kissed you Sweet I would rather be here alone at my task than in the bustle and hateful literary chitchat."

This is not so much the utterance of a disillusioned man as that of a sick one. He was taxing his strength for all it would bear, and had no energy left for companies, or crowds, or gadding of any sort.

Sometime during the week of July nineteenth, Brown appeared at Shanklin, together with a fellow named Martin, one of that innumerable outside circle of friends whom Keats occasionally mentions. The arrival of Brown was a pleasure, but the racket of four young men in very confined quarters Keats found hard to bear. He excuses himself for not having written to Fanny Brawne "on Saturday" by saying:

> "We have had four in our small room playing at cards night and morning leaving me no undisturb'd opportunity to write. Now Rice and Martin are gone I am at liberty."

It must have been a great relief when Rice and Martin departed, leaving only Brown, whom Keats had come to regard almost as another brother. He and Brown had grown habituated to living together, and, as had happened before, Brown's splendid health and cheerful outlook on life were tonic to Keats's soul. The letter to Miss Brawne was written on Sunday, July twenty-fifth, so Rice and Martin must have left Shanklin either late on Saturday or early on Sunday morning. The immediate effect of their departure was to send Keats feverishly back to poetry. He

has, he informs Miss Brawne, "been all day employ'd in a very abstr[a]ct Poem." Whether he referred to *Lamia* or to *Hyperion*, which he may have been tinkering, we can only surmise.

To gain any accurate knowledge of Keats's inner life at this period the letters to Fanny Brawne are an indispensable study. Considerations of space alone prevent me from quoting them entire. As it is, we must do with extracts. In this letter, we find him discussing his idea of himself, which was not flattering, and we see how the very longing of his love, only so distantly certain of fulfilment, brought him up sharply against the idea of death. His absence from Fanny Brawne caused every thought connected with her to take on a tinge of morbidness. And this morbidness grew on him all that Summer, grew and grew until it nearly engulfed them both in immediate tragedy, a tragedy only averted by their finally meeting. Here is his mood on that particular Sunday evening:

> "You cannot conceive how I ache to be with you: how I would die for one hour — for what is in the world? I say you cannot conceive; it is impossible you should look with such eyes upon me as I have upon you: it cannot be . . . My dear love, I cannot believe there ever was or ever could be anything to admire in me especially as far as sight goes — I cannot be admired, I am not a thing to be admired. You are, I love you; all I can bring to you is a swooning admiration of your Beauty. I hold that place among Men which snub-nos'd brunettes with meeting eyebrows do among women — they are trash to me — unless I should find one among them with a fire in her heart like the one that burns in mine. You absorb me in spite of myself — you alone: for I look not forward with any pleasure to what is call'd being settled in the world; I tremble at domestic cares — yet for you I would meet them, though if it would leave you the happier I would rather die than do so. I have two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your Loveliness and the hour of my death. O

> that I could have possession of them both in the same minute. I hate the world: it batters too much the wings of my self-will, and would I could take a sweet poison from your lips to send me out of it. From no others would I take it. I am indeed astonish'd to find myself so careless of all cha[r]ms but yours — rememb[e]ring as I do the time when even a bit of ribband was a matter of interest to me."

These cannot have been altogether pleasant letters for a young girl to receive from the man to whom she was engaged. Fanny Brawne must have understood Keats very well, and loved him greatly, to have stood this sort of thing. But all she appears to have done, to judge by Keats's references to her answers, was to assure him, again and again, of his attractiveness and her continuing love. She was not well either, poor girl! But it never seems to have entered her ego-centric lover's head that the separation was a strain for her as well as for him, and that the letters he sent her were anything but soothing. This was the weak side of the affair, and the worst side of Keats which we know — his impenetrable misjudgment of Fanny Brawne. All through his correspondence with her, he tells her that he loves her, but does no single thing to prove it. He never inquires into her concerns, he never seeks to bring her pleasure. It is himself of whom he is thinking always — how their relations affect him, never how they affect her. If he could never have been selfish with her in the great things of life, he seems seldom to have been anything else in the small. Keats was an almost perfect friend, but, alas! a most imperfect lover.

Yet we must not blame him too much, particularly as regards his morbidness. He was a very sick man, leading a life which, for a consumptive, was nothing short of slow suicide. And Fanny Brawne got only the miserable residue of his vitality, after every ounce of energy he had in him had been drained into poetry. The marvel is, not that he was completely spent when his daily stint of work was

over, but that, with the exception of *Otho*, which was a forced product and should never have been attempted, the work itself showed no diminution of power, no least failure of either virility or imagination.

I think we must blame the *Gripus* fragment (I call it so from the name of the chief character) for Brown's having conceived the idea of *Otho the Great*. Undoubtedly he knew of the projected musical farce, and felt how unsuited such a thing was to Keats's genius. Undoubtedly, also, Keats showed him that one completed act when they were safely alone together after Rice and Martin had gone. Whether it were the thought of it before he joined Keats, or the perusal of the act already done, Brown seems to have been ready with an alternative plan at once. Perhaps he came down with it full-fledged in his head, perhaps it popped into his mind while Keats read *Gripus* to him, perhaps it dawned upon him as an aftermath of that event. Whenever it came to him, he had a plan, and the plan was this: He and Keats should write a poetic tragedy. He, with the experience of his one play actually presented five years before, would be responsible for the plot, the general management of scenes, in short for the purely dramatic part of the venture; Keats should supply the poetry. Here is how he described the arrangement to Lord Houghton:[1]

> "At Shanklin he undertook a difficult task; I engaged to furnish him with the title, characters, and dramatic conduct of a tragedy, and he was to enwrap it in poetry. The progress of this work was curious, for while I sat opposite to him, he caught my description of each scene entire, with the characters to be brought forward, the events, and everything to be connected with it. Thus he went on, scene after scene, never knowing nor inquiring into the scene which was to follow, until four acts were completed. It was then he required to know at once all the events

[1] Note by Lord Houghton in the Aldine edition of Keats's works, 1876; quoted in Buxton Forman's Complete Edition.

> that were to occupy the fifth act; I explained them to him, but, after a patient hearing and some thought, he insisted that many incidents in it were too humorous, or, as he termed them, too melodramatic. He wrote the fifth act in accordance with his own views, and so contented was I with his poetry that at the time, and for a long time after, I thought he was in the right."

Keats must have felt himself very inept in the matter of drama to have consented to such a scheme. But truly there was a sufficient reason for his so doing, and this was just that *Otho* was, in absolute fact, a pot-boiler. He did not feel it, it had not lain dormant within him, hatching itself into a shape of meaning and beauty. It was an extraneous thing to him, a cuckoo's egg dropped into the nest of his dreams. This was not true of *Lamia*. He may have begun it just then because he felt he must be writing some poetry — *Gripus*, of course, not being a satisfying thing to do — but he had probably conceived it long before, some time during the Winter when he was reading Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. In his subconsciousness it had remained, and waxed strong, lustrous, and independent, ready to come at a call, or to fall upon him unbidden in no long time if he had not called.

Exactly when the two friends began this odd collaboration, we do not know, but they were well into it by Saturday, July thirty-first. "Brown and I are pretty well harnessed again to our dog-cart. I mean the Tragedy, which goes on sinkingly," Keats informed Dilke in a letter of that date. The "again" is disturbing. Does it mean that *Otho* had been begun at Hampstead? I do not believe so. I think this is one of the many slips to be found in Keats's letters. I believe that the "again" here simply means that he and Brown are settled down to living together as usual, and that he goes on to the tragedy without noticing the possible connection. It is apparent that Dilke knew of the tragedy; but this, Brown, who was in constant

correspondence with Dilke, may have already written about.

What an excellent companion Brown was, how full of amusing resources, how invigorating to Keats, another sentence in Keats's letter shows. As this sentence leads to a sequel, I give it as it stands:

> "The Art of Poetry is not sufficient for us, and if we get on in that as well as we do in painting, we shall by next winter crush the Reviews and the Royal Academy. Indeed, if Brown would take a little of my advice, he could not fail to be the first palet[te] of his day. But odd as it may appear, he says plainly that he cannot see any force in my plea of putting skies in the background, and leaving Indian ink out of an ash tree. The other day he was sketching Shanklin Church, and as I saw how the business was going on, I challenged him to a trial of skill — he lent me Pencil and Paper — we keep the Sketches to contend for the Prize at the Gallery. I will not say whose I think best — but really I do not think Brown's done to the top of the Art."

The sequel was long in coming, but here it is. In 1922, a grand-daughter of Charles Brown, living in New Zealand, sent to Sir Sidney Colvin a pencil sketch of Keats made by her grandfather, together with an account of its origin according to family tradition. The particulars, in Miss Brown's words, are these:

> [1] "Keats and my grandfather were out sketching together; when they came in Keats was a little tired, and he half-reclined in a couch or easy chair. My grandfather opened his portfolio and made this pencil copy. He was pleased with the result and kept it. Then it passed on to my father; after his death my mother gave it to me."

Sir Sidney presented this drawing to the National Portrait Gallery, London, where it now is. At my request, the

[1] Quoted from a paper, *A New Portrait of Keats*, by Sir Sidney Colvin, published in the *Observer* for Sunday, September 24, 1922.

directors of the Gallery most courteously sent me a photograph of the drawing, with permission to reproduce it, and this reproduction stands as the frontispiece of this volume. To me, this drawing ranks only second to the silhouettes in charm. All three attempts are so much more real, more human, than any of the other portraits of Keats, that their discovery is a godsend to those people who have found it very hard to believe that the weak and sentimental youth of Severn's and Hilton's pictures could ever have resembled the strong, masculine, and forceful fellow that Keats certainly was. The namby-pamby was too often confused with the inspirational in the minds of mediocre artists in Keats's day. Brown, with his sturdy commonsense and devotion to fact, has given us an unidealized likeness of a good-looking and interesting man, and he has given us this man under three aspects. How faithfully Brown rendered what he saw, will be realized at once on comparing the three pictures, for Keats's growing weariness, his gradually declining health, is very evident if we take them in chronological order. Indeed, it is this fact more than any other which has emboldened me to hazard the tentative chronology already suggested in the consideration of the silhouettes.[1]

Keats's fatigue, in Brown's drawing, is a commentary to his letters, and in following him through the Summer we must never forget its constant presence, and we must read everything except his poetry by the light of it. Keats was still able to throw off his inertia where poetry was concerned. Even in his letters, we can see how, when his intellect was fairly roused, or his humour sufficiently touched, he could be his normal, vital self for a space. But the lapses back are all too clear, the sense of futility too constantly waiting to pounce upon him, the difficulty of any intercourse but that of his most intimate friends too increasing a trial, for any one with the noticing eye to be mis-

[1] See Vol. II, p. 268.



CHURCH AT SHANKLIN

From an old print in the possession of the author

led for a moment as to his real condition. Keats thought, and his friends thought, that it was the trend of events preying upon him which caused these symptoms; but, miserable as these events were, they were not the half, nor the quarter, of the trouble. Tuberculosis, and neglected tuberculosis at that, is chiefly responsible, and Keats could not have helped feeling as he did, no matter in what current of events life had chosen to place him. And yet I do not wish to over-accentuate all this. Keats was still capable of a long and lusty fight, as we are about to witness.

The debilitating climate of the Isle of Wight was beginning to tell. Keats walked about the country, but, while admitting its beauty, admitted also that it did not interest him. "I do not hesitate to say it is fine," he tells Dilke. "But I have been so many finer walks, with a back ground of lake and mountain instead of the sea, that I am not much touch'd with it, though I credit it with all the Surprise I should have felt if it had taken my cockney maidenhead." Keats thought himself blasé, surfeited with the picturesque; he was not, he was ill. Perhaps Brown agreed with him, perhaps only humoured him; at any rate, it was decided that they should go away and try somewhere else. Where, was not yet determined upon. At the end of the letter to Dilke, Keats says: "We leave this place on the 13th, and will let you know where we may be a few days after."

That was on Saturday, July thirty-first; by the following Thursday, the place had been selected. "This day week we shall move to Winchester; for I feel the want of a Library," he writes to Fanny Brawne on that day. It was time he went. His sensations, as he detailed them later, are very convincing:

> "I began to hate the very posts there — the voice of the old Lady over the way was getting a great Plague. The Fisherman's face never altered any more than our black

teapot — the [k]nob however was knocked off to my little relief."

Before taking him from Shanklin, however, I must give a few more extracts from his August fifth letter to Fanny Brawne. The first is but another illustration of mental unrest, and again we see him raking up the old question of why Miss Brawne should love him:

"Thank God for my diligence! were it not for that I should be miserable. I encourage it, and strive not to think of you — but when I have succeeded in doing so all day and as far as midnight, you return, as soon as this artificial excitement goes off, more severely from the fever I am left in. Upon my soul I cannot say what you could like me for. I do not think myself a fright any more than I do Mr. A., Mr. B., and Mr. C. — yet if I were a woman I should not like A.B.C. But enough of this. So you intend to hold me to my promise of seeing you in a short time. I shall keep it with as much sorrow as gladness: for I am not one of the Paladins of old who liv'd upon water grass and smiles for years together. What though would I not give to-night for the gratification of my eyes alone?"

A pleasant thing this, for Fanny Brawne to dwell upon. Only for a little bit of compensation immediately following, this must have been a somewhat bitter remark to digest. The palliating passage, which comes after his telling her of Winchester, is as follows:

"Brown will leave me there to pay a visit to Mr. Snook at Bedhampton: in his absence I will flit to you and back. I will stay very little while, for as I am in a train of writing now I fear to disturb it — let it have its course bad or good — in it I shall try my own strength and the public pulse. At Winchester I shall get your Letters more readily; and it being a cathedral City I shall have a pleasure always a great one to me when near a Cathedral, of reading them during the service up and down the Aisle."

The next day, Friday, he was distinctly more buoyant;

even so much so as to plan their future together, with that fine scorn of the usual and humdrum peculiar to his species and age. It is a relief to read this passage, and it must have been a relief to Fanny Brawne. It was a mercy that he wrote the two days' epistles as one letter. This is the passage in question:

> "You would delight very greatly in the walks about here; the Cliffs, woods, hills, sands, rocks, &c. about here. They are however not so fine but I shall give them a hearty good bye to exchange them for my Cathedral. — Yet again I am not so tired of Scenery as to hate Switzerland. We might spend a pleasant year at Berne or Zurich — if it should please Venus to hear my 'Beseech thee to hear us O Goddess.' And if she should hear, God forbid we should what people call, *settle* — turn into a pond, a stagnant Lethe — a vile crescent, row or buildings. Better be imprudent moveables than prudent fixtures. Open my Mouth at the Street door like the Lion's head at Venice to receive hateful cards, letters, messages. Go out and wither at tea parties; freeze at dinners; bake at dances; simmer at routs. No my love, trust yourself to me and I will find you nobler amusements, fortune favouring."

Before leaving for Winchester, Brown had gone off for a couple of days' tramp, "gadding over the country with his ancient knapsack," says Keats. It shows how rapidly writing and reading were recapturing Keats that he could end his letter to Fanny Brawne by saying:

> "Now I like his society as well as any Man's yet regretted his return — it broke in upon me like a Thunderbolt. I had got in a dream among my Books — really luxuriating in a solitude and silence you alone should have disturb'd."

It seems to have been on August twelfth, as Keats told Fanny Brawne, and not the thirteenth, as he had said to Dilke, that he and Brown finally pulled up stakes and set off for Winchester, going by way of Newport, Cowes, and

Southampton. If he stopped to consider it on his journey, Keats may very well have been not a little proud of the work accomplished during the seven and a half weeks he had been at Shanklin. Not to count the problematic act of *Gripus*, he had half finished *Lamia* and completed four acts of *Otho*.

It was hard to break into his train of thought, but Winchester was an alluring objective. It must have been a fine Summer's day for the sail across to Southampton, for Keats sent a delightful description of it to Fanny Brawne. He makes the scene extremely clear, windy and sunny, and what is more, he links it all up for us historically. Together with Keats and his great preoccupation, a preoccupation entirely apart from locality or date, is the Prince Regent, leaving Brighton for an afternoon on the water. Faint echoes of bands, visions of promenaders on esplanades, of brightly varnished barouches and curricles, of spangles, spurs, and uniforms, come to us out of Keats's little sketch. He tells it simply with no thought of suggestion, its patina is the growth of a hundred years. Here is the life which Keats never touched, but which makes so gay and tawdry a back-drop to his period:

> "One of the pleasantest things I have seen lately was at Cowes. The Regent in his Yatch (I think they spell it[1]) was anchored opposite — a beautiful vessel — and all the Yatchs and boats on the coast were passing and repassing it; and circuiting and tacking about it in every direction — I never beheld anything so silent, light, and graceful."

Reaching Winchester, apparently on Friday, August thirteenth, the friends speedily found "tolerably good and cheap Lodgings," but they did not find a library. This was disappointing, but everything else was pleasant. Keats found Winchester "an exceeding pleasant Town, enriched with a beautiful Cathedral, and surrounded by a

[1] This spelling was not infrequent in Keats's day.

fresh-looking country." This he wrote to Bailey after a two days' acquaintance with it. The next day, to Fanny Brawne, he expressed himself as perfectly satisfied: "This Winchester is a fine place . . . The little coffin of a room at Shanklin is exchanged for a large room, where I can promenade at my pleasure — looks out onto a beautiful — blank side of a house. It is strange that I should like it better than the view of the sea from our room at Shanklin." And finally, after two weeks, he was fairly in love with it; witness this, from a letter to his sister: "we like it very much: it is the pleasantest Town I ever was in, and has the most recommendations of any."

But again, Keats was there to work. He had taken the bit in his teeth, and told Brown that he would do the fifth act of *Otho* alone; and at it he went. So absorbed was he that it was hard to wrench himself away to write letters. It is therefore odd that the first letter he wrote was to Bailey, to whom he had not written for months and was never going to write to again. But that was a letter which required very little thought and no emotion at all. It was not until the sixteenth[1] that he could bring himself to write to Fanny Brawne. Poor girl, her dark days were upon her, as she must soon have discovered.

This letter was almost brutal — almost, but not quite; and yet I think ninety-nine girls out of a hundred would have considered it so. This is what Fanny Brawne received, to make of it what she could:

> "My dear Girl — what shall I say for myself? I have been here four days and not yet written you — 'tis true I have had many teasing letters of business to dismiss — and I have been in the Claws, like a serpent in an Eagle's, of the last act of our Tragedy. This is no excuse; I know it; I do not presume to offer it. I have no right either to ask a speedy answer to let me know how lenient you are — I

[1] Keats dated the letter "August 17th," but it is postmarked "AU. 16 1819." Author's Collection.

must remain some days in a Mist — I see you through a Mist: as I daresay you do me by this time. Believe in the first Letters I wrote you: I assure you I felt as I wrote — I could not write so now. The thousand images I have had pass through my brain — my uneasy spirits — my unguess'd fate — all spread as a veil between me and you. Remember I have had no idle leisure to brood over you — 'tis well perhaps I have not. I could not have endured the throng of jealousies that used to haunt me before I had plunged so deeply into imaginary interests. I would fain, as my sails are set, sail on without an interruption for a Brace of Months longer — I am in complete cue — in the fever; and shall in these four Months do an immense deal. This Page as my eye skims over it I see is excessively unloverlike and ungallant — I cannot help it — I am no officer in yawing quarters; no Parson-romeo. My mind is heaped to the full; stuff'd like a cricket ball — if I strive to fill it more it would burst. I know the generality of women would hate me for this; that I should have so unsoften'd, so hard a Mind as to forget them; forget the brightest realities for the dull imaginations of my own Brain. But I conjure you to give it a fair thinking; and ask yourself whether 'tis not better to explain my feelings to you, than write artificial Passion. — Besides, you would see through it. It would be vain to strive to deceive you. 'Tis harsh, harsh, I know it. My heart seems now made of iron — I could not write a proper answer to an invitation to Idalia. You are my Judge: my forehead is on the ground."

It appears that Miss Brawne had bridled a little at Keats's playful remark in his last letter from Shanklin that she meant to keep him to his promise of running up to town to see her, for he replies:

"You say I may do as I please—I do not think with any conscience I can; my cash resources are for the present stopp'd; I fear for some time. I spend no money, but it increases my debts. I have all my life thought very little of these matters — they seem not to belong to me. It may be a proud sentence; but by Heaven I am as entirely above

all matters of interest as the Sun is above the Earth — and though of my own money I should be careless; of my Friends' I must be spare. You see how I go on — like so many strokes of a hammer. I cannot help it — I am impell'd, driven to it. I am not happy enough for silken Phrases, and silver sentences. I can no more use soothing words to you than if I were at this moment engaged in a charge of Cavalry."

In truth, the expression was a just one. The writing of *Otho* called for much the same qualities as a charge of cavalry would have done: grit and vigour. He was writing against time, forcing himself on and on, looking neither to the right nor the left, keeping all his faculties pointed on his objective. *Lamia*, which was his own and which he wanted to do, was as much pushed aside as was Fanny Brawne. He was "engaged in a charge of cavalry," there is the answer to the letter. How necessary this concentration was to him at the moment becomes apparent at the end of the letter. He was as he was, because things were as they were. This is the final paragraph:

"Forgive me for this flint-worded Letter, and believe and see that I cannot think of you without some sort of energy — though mal à propos. Even as I leave off it seems to me that a few more moments' thought of you would uncrystallize and dissolve me. I must not give way to it — but turn to my writing again — if I fail I shall die hard. O my love, your lips are growing sweet again to my fancy — I must forget them. Ever your affectionate

KEATS."

It had to be, perhaps. Perpetual longing perpetually denied was too wracking; he felt it impossible to bear. Is it to his credit, or the reverse, that he could put the thought of Fanny Brawne away from him and immerse himself in his writing? That is a question impossible to answer without taking all the many factors of the case into due consideration. Probably the fairest judgment one can accord

him is to say that he was mercilessly selfish, but that he was also in a terrible situation, pathological in mind and body, tortured and seeking to escape torture through the opiate of work. I think, at this time, that his withdrawal from Fanny Brawne was intended to be only transient; later I believe that it became deliberate with a view to becoming final, but that we need not discuss now. Miss Brawne heard no more from him for a month, which must have been nothing short of ghastly for her. He protected himself at her expense, that is the amount of it, and the only possible excuse for him is that he acted through ignorance. That a woman could love as sharply and incisively as a man, was something he could never be made to believe, and his obstinacy caused him much suffering.

The "teasing letters of business" all harked back to George. Already, in Shanklin, he had received a letter from George begging him to see Abbey and squeeze some money out of him if possible. Keats wrote and wrote again, but Abbey was in an awkward fix and no money was forthcoming.

While all this turmoil was going on in the mind of the driven young fellow in Winchester, things, and even pleasant things, were going on about him elsewhere. Sir James Mackintosh had written to Taylor on July nineteenth: "Have you any other literary novelties in verse? I very much admire your young poet with all his singularities. Where is he? and what high design does he meditate?" This is a little thing, but Sir James Mackintosh was a man of considerable force and position. This next is a little thing too, but how great a devotion it shows. Toward the end of August, Taylor went to Retford in Nottinghamshire on a visit to his father. Before going, he asked Woodhouse to send him a copy of the *Pot of Basil* so that he might read it to his family. In an undated letter [1]

[1] Unpublished letter from Woodhouse to Taylor. Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.

to him, Woodhouse voices their joint opinion of the poem:

> "I bethought me on Saturday of my promise about *Isabella*, and took the earliest opportunity . . . of enquiring whether you had left out the Book in which she was to be copied: but without the least idea that you had done so. However, William found it, and I have copied the Basil pot in it & given it . . . to Hessey along with this letter to forward to you . . . Recollect that this is the 4th time I have written it over, recollect also that I could say it by heart with about 5 promptings; and if, as really was the case, I went through it with more pleasure than ever, one of two conclusions is inevitable: either that it is a noble poem, or that my judgement is not worth the tythe of a fig. And I am quite content to be set down for a dolt in the opinion of that man who should deny the first of the above alternatives. May those to whom you show the poem derive as much gratification from it as I did."

Meantime *Otho the Great* marched on to a conclusion. We have no more letters for a week, and by that time the play was finished.

Otho is, after all, a hybrid performance. It would have been impossible for any man to write a play of unity, balance, and psychological interest, when he had no idea of its general trend to start with, and no clear conception of the characters, whose actions throughout came upon him piecemeal. If Keats had not been so impressed with the idea that he must make money, if Brown had not been so convinced that the stage was his friend's surest means of doing so, if Keats had not been so docile nor Brown so self-confident, *Otho* would never have been begun. As it is, the tragedy was time wasted. The precious weeks spent in grinding it out might have given us another story as good as *Lamia* or the fragment of the *Eve of St. Mark*, indeed, the nonfinishing of the latter tale is one of the greatest misfortunes of Keats's life.

Taken from every point of view, *Otho* is a failure. It is dull beyond belief, it is unnatural, perfervid, and weak. The verse is of the type which any capable rhymester can turn out by the yard. Not once in the whole play is there a turn of phrase, a trick of expression, a flash of genius, to remind us that the tragedy is by Keats. It is hack work of the most glaring variety. Nearly every page is marred by verbal echoes from some poet or other; even the plot is pieced together from this or that familiar play, although as, until the fifth act, Brown was responsible for this part of the production, that need not concern us here. For all these tides of reminiscence, I must refer my readers to other books;[1] it is enough to note their existence in this. The fifth act is more dramatic than the rest of the play. Ludolph's insanity, although over-hysterical and chattering in its portrayal, occasionally touches upon a human emotion, some slight suggestion of pathos, a little genuine feeling. Possibly Kean, for whom Keats designed the play, could have made Ludolph convincing in this last act; but even Kean would have been taxed to his utmost to keep any audience interested during the first four. To be sure, audiences in Keats's day put up with a good deal of this sort of stuff. To a modern reader, *Otho* is inconceivably dreary and stupid, and the best comment on its acting qualities may be found in the fact that it has never been presented on any stage. Its history, so far as Keats and Brown were concerned, was one long disappointment, but the disappointment did not fall upon them all at once, as we shall see. Keats could not believe that what he had worked so hard at was really extremely poor. For once he was deceived as to the quality of one of his own things. He, and we may suppose some of his friends also, believed what

[1] The principal books in which these parallels may be traced are *The Poetical Works of John Keats*, edited by E. de Sélincourt, Fourth Edition; and the unpublished thesis: *Shakespeare and Keats*, by Claude L. Finney, in the Widener Library, Harvard University.

they wished to believe, and it was a long time before the poverty of the work was borne in upon them. Severn, for one, believed in the play till the end of the chapter, which was loyal, but not perspicacious.

At this point, I am enabled, through a concatenation of circumstances, to give several hitherto unpublished letters which throw much light on Keats's doings and thoughts during the end of August and the early weeks of September. From letters of Keats, Woodhouse, Taylor, and Brown, all taken in conjunction, we gain a very vivid picture of these weeks. I make no scruple, therefore, of quoting from this correspondence at some length.

The first letter is from Keats. It was published (probably from a copy) in a mutilated condition by Buxton Forman. As so much was left out in his version, I give the letter[1] entire:

"Winchester Monday morn
24 Aug^st^[2]

MY DEAR TAYLOR

You will perceive that I do not write you till I am forced by necessity: that I am sorry for. You must forgive me for entering abruptly on the subject, merely prefixing an entreaty that you will not consider my business manner of wording and proceeding any distrust of, or standing against you; but put it to the account of a desire of order and regularity. I have been rather unfortunate lately in money concerns — from a threatened chancery suit. I was deprived at once of all recourse to my Guardian. I relied a little on some of my debts being paid — which are of a tolerable amount — but I have not had one pound refunded. For these three months Brown has advanced me money: he is not at all flush and I am anxious to get some elsewhere. We have together been engaged (this I should wish to remain secret) in a Tragedy which I have just finish'd; and from which we hope to share moderate Profits. Being thus far connected, Brown proposed to me,

[1] Author's Collection.

[2] Monday was August 23rd. Keats seldom knew the day of the month.

to stand with me responsible for any money you may advance to me to drive through the summer. I must observe again that it is not from want of reliance on you[r] readiness to assist me that I offer a Bill; but as a relief to myself from a too lax sensation of Life — which ought to be responsible which requires chains for its own sake — duties to fulfil with the more earnestness the less strictly they are imposed. Were I completely without hope — it might be different — but am I not right to rejoice in the idea of not being Burthensome to my friends? I feel every confidence that if I choose I may be a popular writer; that I never will be; but for all that I will get a livelihood. I equally dislike the favour of the public with the love of a woman — they are both a cloying treacle to the wings of independence. I shall ever consider them (People) as debtors to me for verses, not myself to them for admiration — which I can do without. I have of late been indulging my spleen by composing a preface *at* them: after all resolving never to write a preface at all. 'There are so many verses,' would I have said to them, give me so much means to buy pleasure with as a relief to my hours of labour. You will observe at the end of this if you put down the Letter 'How a solitary life engenders pride and egotism!' True: I know it does — but this Pride and egotism will enable me to write finer things than anything else could — so I will indulge it. Just so much as I am humbled by the genius above my grasp, am I exalted and look with hate and contempt upon the literary world. A Drummer boy who holds out his hand familiarly to a field marshal — that Drummer boy with me is the good word and favour of the public. Who would wish to be among the commonplace crowd of the little-famous — who are each individually lost in a throng made up of themselves? is this worth louting or playing the hypocrite for? To beg suffrages for a seat on the benches of a myriad-aristocracy of Letters? This is not wise — I am not a wise man. Tis Pride. I will give you a definition of a proud Man. He is a Man who has neither vanity nor wisdom — one fill'd with hatreds cannot be vain — neither can he be wise. Pardon me for hammering instead of

writing. Remember me to Woodhouse, Hessey and all in Percy street.

Ever yours sincerely
JOHN KEATS.

P.S. I have read what Brown has said on the other side — He agrees with me that this manner of proceeding might appear too harsh, distant and indelicate with you. This however will place all in a clear light. Had I to borrow money of Brown and were in your house, I should request the use of your name in the same manner."

The "doublings" of this letter are taken up with a note to Taylor from Brown, as follows:

"DEAR SIR,

Keats has told me the purport of this letter. Had it been in my power to have prevented this application to you, I would have done so. What property I have is locked up, sending me quarterly & half yearly driblets, insufficient for the support of both of us. I am fully acquainted with his circumstances, — the monies owing to him amount to £230, — the chancery suit will not I think eventually be injurious to him, — and his perseverance in the employment of his talents, — will, in my opinion, in a short time, place him in a situation more pleasant to his feelings as far as his pocket is concerned. Yet, for all this, I am aware, a man of business should have every security in his power, and Keats especially would be uncomfortable at borrowing unless he gave all *in his power*: besides his own name to a Bill he has now to offer but mine, which I readily agree to, and (speaking in a business-like way) consider I possess ample security for doing so. It is therefore to be considered as a matter of right on your part to demand my name in conjunction with his; and if you should be inclined to judge otherwise, still it would be painful to him not to give you a double security when he can do so, & painful to me to have it withheld when it ought to be given.

Yours sincerely,
CHAS BROWN."

Keats, as we have noticed before,[1] was not skilful in the composition of begging letters. It was one thing to ask the return of a loan, but quite another to approach someone on whom he had no possible claim. It hurt his pride to do it, and with the worst possible taste he allowed his pride to grow mile high, because of its very injury, until it quite over-topped whatever other sentiments the letter contained. Taylor was not in Fleet Street when this remarkable epistle arrived, he was at his father's at Retford, so the letter was forwarded. This occasioned some delay, and his subsequent correspondence with Woodhouse on the subject caused more. Meanwhile Keats, having posted his request, sat down to wait, with what composure he could muster.

On Wednesday, August twenty-fifth, he wrote to Reynolds in much the same strain that he had written to Taylor. He declares himself convinced of his power to become a popular writer, but with a fine gesture refuses "the poisonous suffrage of a public." But to Reynolds he can expand, and he does. After suggesting to Reynolds that Rice, to whom he has just written,[2] will tell Reynolds all about the removal from Shanklin, and how he, Keats, likes Winchester, he continues: "I have indeed scarcely anything else to say . . . except I was to give you a history of sensations, and day-nightmares." He is willing to go so far as to announce:

> "my thoughts and feelings which are of the selfish nature, home speculations, every day continue to make me more iron — I am convinced more and more, every day, that fine writing is, next to fine doing, the top thing in the world; the Paradise Lost becomes a greater wonder."

Keats is both encouraged and as blue as indigo, and these two sensations are simultaneous, or so nearly so that I doubt if he himself could disentangle them. The last

[1] See Vol. I, p. 464. [2] This letter appears to be lost.

half of the letter is taken up with this pathetic bit of self-revelation:

> "The soul is a world of itself, and has enough to do in its own home. Those whom I know already, and who have grown as it were a part of myself, I could not do without: but for the rest of mankind, they are as much a dream to me as Milton's Hierarchies. I think if I had a free and healthy and lasting organization of heart, and lungs as strong as an ox's, so as to be able to bear unhurt the shock of extreme thought and sensation without weariness, I could pass my life very nearly alone though it should last eighty years. But I feel my body too weak to support me to the height, I am obliged continually to check myself, and be nothing. It would be vain for me to endeavour after a more reasonable manner of writing to you. I have nothing to speak of but myself, and what can I say but what I feel? If you should have any reason to regret this state of excitement in me, I will turn the tide of your feelings in the right Channel, by mentioning that it is the only state for the best sort of Poetry — that is all I care for, all I live for. Forgive me for not filling up the whole sheet; Letters become so irksome to me, that the next time I leave London I shall petition them all to be spared me. To give me credit for constancy, and at the same time waive letter writing will be the highest indulgence I can think of."

What a different man is this from the gregarious young fellow of two and a half years before, of Hunt's parlour and Haydon's studio! That he felt himself to be ill, is quite evident, and that he found absence from Fanny Brawne such a strain that his only way of combating it was to try and smother the thought of her by any means in his power. Keats's diagnosis of his mental state was wrong, so much we can be very sure from his comparative peace and happiness in April and May when he and Miss Brawne were seeing each other daily. In remembrance, this seemed a time of aroused desires constantly thwarted, and as such he feared not only to face it, but to think of it.

But retrospective memories are liable to strange distortions. As he had lived those months, they had given him much besides misery. Now he had forgotten, and was almost consciously pushing himself into the conviction that poetry was enough for him, which, as the sequel shows, it most emphatically was not. He was self-deceived in perfect good faith, it is true, but a poor dupe nevertheless, and an immolated victim of symptoms which neither he nor any one else had the wit to assign to their real cause.

To add its quota to the cloudy outlook, he and Brown heard a rumour that Kean was to go to America for the Winter. If so, what would happen to the tragedy? This news descended upon them just as Brown was copying *Otho* "in a superb style — better than it deserves." "I had hoped to give Kean another opportunity to shine," he tells his sister with wry humour. "What can we do now? There is not another actor of Tragedy in all London or Europe. The Covent Garden Company is execrable." There was nothing to do, so far as the tragedy went, but for Brown to continue to copy it; and nothing for Keats to do but set himself to work on *Lamia*, and saunter round Winchester in "the delightful Weather we have had for two Months." As for his walks, "a Mile a day" was, he declared "quite sufficient," still he regretted not having "been well enough to bathe though I have been two Months by the sea and live now close to delicious bathing." Yes, there was one other thing he could do, which was to count his ebbing store of shillings and pence every day and wonder why on earth Taylor did not answer.

The reason for Taylor's silence was that he could not make up his mind just what course to take. He did not like the tone of Keats's letter — it would have been miraculous if he had — and he feared to make a hasty decision. Knowing himself of a much less understanding and conciliatory temper than his friend Woodhouse, and realizing Woodhouse's deep sympathy with Keats, Taylor, who must have

been an unusually temperate and just man, sent the questionable letter to Woodhouse and asked his opinion. Taylor's letter has not come to light, but Woodhouse's reply[1] to it has. I quote those parts of it which refer to Keats. It is dated: "Temple, Tuesday Evg. 31, Augt 1819."

> "Though I have let a post elapse, I apprehend this letter, which will go in a parcel to you, will reach you as soon as Keats's answer. I have read his Letter; and I did it before I had read yours, and with my usual disposition to understand his terms in that sense in which he uses them. Now I apprehend his word Pride to mean nothing more than literary Pride, — that disposition which arises out of a Consciousness of superior & improving poetical Powers, & which would keep him, even in his present state of comparative imperfectness, from writing so as to minister to the depraved taste of the age. It is not in my opinion personal pride, but literary pride which his letter shews; — That he has some of the former also, I believe; But his letter does not evince it, further than as it displays a solitary spirit. The Pride contained in his letter, as I understand it, is a noble pride, akin to that Indication which Milton pours forth in language of such "solemn tenour & deep organ tone" at the beginning of his 2d book on "the reason of Ch. Government." and for which I honor him. And I am not quite certain whether your Post Script was not added in consequence of a new ray of light breaking in upon you on this subject. Is he wrong to be dissatisfied with the Prospect of a mere 'Seat on the Bench of a myriad-aristocracy in Letters'? or to keep aloof from them and their works, — or to dislike the favor of such a 'public,' as bepraises the Crabbes, & the Barretts, & the Codruses of the day. I wonder how he came to stumble upon that deep truth that 'people are debtors to him for his verses & not he to them for admiration.' Methinks such a conviction on any one's mind is enough to make half a Milton of him.
>
> I agree with you in every syllable you say about Pride. But I do not think it applies to Keats, as he shews himself

[1] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.

in his letter. And if you were to cull out a person upon whom to fit your summary of the whole (neither self praise nor man's praise can turn the scale either way, — nor can unmerited neglect or censure weight a feather) I think, as far as Poetry is concerned, that very man would be Keats as evidenced in his letter.

Having complied with your wish of telling you what I thought of his letter, I come now to his request. I doubt whether he will want so much as you mention. I apprehend 50£ or 60£ would suffice him, but this his next letter will shew. I think I mentioned to you how I was situated as to Cash, that I had scraped all I could together, to pay my Father, whose two calls lately had run him close. That I expected nothing till winter, and had made my calculation upon wanting little till that time. Under these circumstances I could not command £100. But I can spare £50. which shall be at your disposal, at what time & place you think proper. You are well acquainted with my good wishes towards Keats, as well as with their complete disinterestedness. Whatever People regret that they could not do for Shakespeare or Chatterton, because he did not live in their time, that I would embody into a Rational principle, and (with due regard to certain expediences) do for Keats. But one's means are not unlimited, and one would not wish to give rise to expectations, which should end in disappointment, nor would one like to have the oats eaten by other cattle. I wish he could be cured of the vice of lending — for in a poor man, it is a vice.

I think with you about the offer of Brown's name, and about the nonsense of the note. But would it be or not beneficial to K. that it should be taken? And is any part of the money to go to Brown? The sum will perhaps enable you to judge.

Hessey spoke about Keats's letter, & wants, & quoted your intimation to him, so that I could not do less than say he should see the letter. He will not 'peach' about the Tragedy, and there is no other secret in it. I think to shew him your letter too. Perhaps he may think with me, and contrary to you, that the obligation to K. may prove beneficial to 'the business.'

I can say nothing about what is best to be done, for K. I am tempest tost on the subject, and even with the light of his next letter I may be as much in the dark. I think (and you need not make a bow for the compliment) that you are the prudenter man of the two, to judge in this case. But take this with you. 1st I really can't spare more 'as in presenti,' than the sum I have named. And 2d my friendship for the poor fellow wod willingly go, if need is, greater lengths than merely lending you money to lend him.

I shall be out of town in about 10 days, but I can send you (or Hessey) a draft from any place . . .

I like Brown's few lines much."

At the end of the letter, Woodhouse says:

"Reynolds is off, but before he went he called and left me the Sonnet — and a letter he had received from Keats. I send it to you: It will be a Comment on parts of his to you."

The sonnet cannot be traced, it may not have been by Keats at all; the letter to Reynolds is most certainly the one from which I have just quoted.

It appears from this letter as though Woodhouse thought that Taylor had written something to Keats without waiting for his, Woodhouse's, reply, but Taylor seems to have been too cautious for that. Keats waited for over a week and no answer came. No answer came from any of the letters he had written, even the *Examiner* ceased to arrive, and he and Brown relied on that for information about Kean's plans. By Tuesday, August thirty-first,[1] he could stand it no longer and wrote to Taylor again.

This letter is also mutilated in the Buxton Forman editions, and even in the unmutilated part is incorrect, but as these textual inaccuracies are slight, I will quote only the last part of the letter, most of which is published for the first time. I copy from the letter[2] itself:

[1] Keats dated the letter "Sept. 1, 1819," but there are two postmarks on it, one "AU. 31, 1819," the other "SE. 1, 1819."

[2] Author's Collection.

"Why I should come on you with all these complaints, I cannot explain to myself: especially as I suspect you must be in the Country. Do answer me soon for I really must know something. I must steer myself by the rudder of Information. And I am in want of a Month's cash — now believe me I do not apply to you as if I thought you had a gold Mine: no — I understand these matters well enough now having become well acquainted with the disbursements every Man is tempted to make beyond his means. From this time I have resolved myself to refuse all such requests: tell me you are not flush and I shall thank you heartily. That is a duty you owe to yourself as well as to *me* I have mulcted Brown to[o] much: let it be my last sin of the kind. I will try what use it will be to insist on my debts being paid."

Before Taylor had a chance to receive this, he had acted by writing to Woodhouse that he thought fifty pounds might be appropriated to Keats, but only thirty sent him, and by writing to Keats to expect a remittance. Woodhouse is our informant about the transaction, for he wrote to Taylor on Tuesday, the seventh, as follows:

[1] "I was favoured with your last on Saturday, & saw off a Bk.p. Bill for 30£ to Keats. Hessey holds the rest at his disposal. The funds of this Beaumont & Fletcher pair . . . were at a low, — verily at a silver, ebb. But, with your supply, there came an announcement that some Cash had gone to *Chichester*, by mistake, in payment of one of the Debts due to K. so that he was quite flush."

It was certainly generous of Woodhouse to call it "your supply" to Taylor, when it was his own money all the time. Woodhouse's delicacy in realizing that it would be easier for Keats to accept a loan from his publishers than from him was admirable. One likes Woodhouse more and more the better one knows him. And his generosity did not stop here, he made plans. Later in this letter, he says:

[1] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.

"If my plans for the Summer were not laid past alteration; I wod go upon a poetical spree: into France to pick up bits of Provençal & old Poetry etc. Or wod it not be better to 'miser it' till next Summer so as to afford to take J.K. with me — and should you like to trust your personage with us? But we have plenty of time to think of it."

Time! Time! There was no time, already it was too late. But what a pity that circumstances might not have given Keats this spree and with these men.

The letter from which Woodhouse got the information which he handed on to Taylor was one written by Keats to Hessey.[1] It has never been printed, so I give it in full.

"Winchester, Sunday Sept. 5th.

MY DEAR HESSEY,

I received this morning yours of yesterday enclosing a 30£ bank post bill. I have been in fear of the Winchester Jail for some time: neither Brown nor myself could get an answer from any one. This morning I hear that some unknown part of a Sum due, to me and for which I had been waiting three weeks has been sent to Chichester by mistake. Brown has borrow'd money of a friend of his in Hampshire. A few days ago we had a few shillings left — and now between us we have 60£ besides what is waiting in the Chichester post office. To be a complete Midas I suppose some one will send me a pair of asses ears by the waggon. There has been such an embargo laid on our correspondence that I can scarcely believe your letter was only dated yesterday. It seems miraculous.

Ever yours sincerely,

JOHN KEATS

I am sorry to hear such a bad account of himself from Taylor."

The man who had sent the money to Chichester was Haslam, who was paying back part of a sum formerly borrowed of George.

[1] Author's Collection.

On this same Sunday, Keats wrote again, in duty bound, to Taylor. The information that Taylor was far from well, set Keats off upon a dissertation which might almost be called medical. The man who could so interest himself in a scientific subject might surely have turned his attention to science if other things had not claimed him even more imperiously. In dealing with Keats, one must always remember that, with him, it was never other things less, but simply poetry more. If legend were all we had to test his quality, this fact alone would prove him among the major poets. Because this passage is important as an illustration of one side of his nature, his mind, I quote a part of it here:

> [1]"You will find the country air do more for you than you expect. But it must be proper country air . . . You should live in a dry, gravelly, barren, elevated country open to the currents of air, and such a place is generally furnished with the finest springs. The neighbourhood of a rich inclosed fulsome arable Land especially in a valley and almost as bad on a flat, would be almost as bad as the smoke of fleet street. Such a place as this was shanklin only open to the south east and surrounded by hills in every other direction. From this south east came the damps from the sea which having no egress the air would for days together take on an unhealthy idiosyncrasy altogether enervating and weakening as a city Smoke — I felt it very much. Since I have been at Winchester I have been improving in health — it is not so confined — and there is on one side of the city a dry chalky down where the air is worth sixpence a pint. So if you do not get better at Retford do not impute it to your own weakness before you have well considered the nature of the air and soil."

This leads on to a consideration of the effects of agriculture on character, in which, however, we will not follow him. A little later, he thanks Taylor for coming to his aid, and has the grace to say: "Had I known of your illness

[1] Corrected from the original letter. Author's Collection.

I should not have written in such fiery phrase in my first letter." One sentence at the end of this letter is arresting, he has been speaking of *Otho* which he hopes Taylor "will not think labour misspent," and adds:

> "Since I finish'd it I have finish'd Lamia: and am now occupied in revising St. Agnes' Eve... I will cross the letter with some lines from Lamia."

Lamia is commonly spoken of as having been written at the same time as *Otho*, dove-tailing in with it, as it were. But a careful study of the letters makes it evident that this was not the case. Part I of *Lamia* was finished before Brown's arrival at Shanklin, and from the moment of the starting upon *Otho* Keats devoted himself entirely to the tragedy until it was done, only after that returning to his neglected poem. But he returned to it with such zest as to accomplish the three hundred odd lines of Part II in short order.

About one thing we must make no mistake; *Lamia* was certainly planned, or, at least, registered as a possible subject for a narrative poem, before Keats left Hampstead. He had even talked about it with Reynolds, as is proved by his mention of it in his letter from Shanklin as something which Reynolds had already heard of. Realizing this, we need not be surprised that the form of the poem is somewhat different from anything he had attempted before; it came as the tag end of his experimental orgy, and was conceived as another experiment. In this instance, the experiment was one of form. Keats was not striking out any new paths, he was merely permitting himself a stroll on someone else's property where he had not happened to wander before. Brown told Lord Houghton that Keats wrote *Lamia* "with great care after much study of Dryden's versification." Commenting on this, Professor de Sélincourt has written: [1] "The versification is closely modelled

[1] *The Poems of John Keats*, edited by E. de Sélincourt.

upon the *Fables* of Dryden, from which Keats learnt how to relate his metre with his sentence structure and to use both the triplet and the Alexandrine with striking success." Professor de Sélincourt's "striking success" is, I think, a little too strong. Keats sometimes employs these devices happily, but at other times his use of them is decidedly clumsy. The effect of a triplet, or an alexandrine, breaking into a block of heroic couplets is to bring a sense of pause, even amounting sometimes to a definite feeling of finality, to the passage so treated. To use either of these devices when no such effect is intended, mars the consecutive flow of the passage in which they appear and injures its rhythm. Too often in *Lamia* we find Keats committing this blunder. This is due to his inexpertness in handling a very valuable rhythmical contrivance with which he is not yet quite familiar. *Lamia* is a tempting study to the technician, but I must not let myself be beguiled into anything of the sort here. There are other, more important, aspects of the poem to consider just now.

The source of *Lamia*, we know. Keats wrote it at the end of the first page of his fair copy of the poem, which is still in existence.[1] He ran across the story in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and, strangely enough, it is one of the only two stories throughout that work which lend themselves to poetical treatment. Having stumbled on his plot, Keats found it enormously to his liking in the temper he was in. It deals with the crushing effect of reality when brought into conflict with dream. What if *Lamia* were an enchantress, what if her true form were that of a snake, what if her gifts were illusion, is it not better to dwell in ignorance and illusion, if these things bring happiness, than to see by the cold, cruel, stark light of truth? We need not scoff at the question, for is it not, after all, rather difficult to answer? Remember Keats's Paolo and Francesca dream, and how he had longed to dream it every night;

[1] Bemis Collection.

remember the soothing vision which the nightingale's song had brought him. He was encompassed by dangers and difficulties in his waking life, but dreaming was his heritage; should he, must he, eschew it, must he play the scornful, keen-eyed philosopher to his own imaginative joys? He solves nothing in his tale, unless the fact that Lycius dies is a solution. But even here the question persists, for is the death of Lycius due to the fact that he has discovered Lamia's true status, or simply the result of her being torn from him? Keats has no answer to give, the puzzle is as much his as his readers'.

I have dealt with the substratum of the poem first, but we must not forget the superstructure. On the surface, *Lamia* is a story, a very captivating and excellent story. And it is a story of Greece, that charming Elizabethan conception of Greece which always enchanted Keats. With Dryden as a distantly related godfather to his undertaking, Keats boldly steps into his tale. The speed with which he narrates it is something new to him. It owes much of its success to its briefness and swiftness, and even its odd lapses back into the sentimentality of his early work, regrettable though these are, cannot take away from the firmness and solidity which is a marked effect of the directness of the whole.

Lamia is by no means such a marvel of homogeneous treatment as the *Eve of St. Agnes*; it is no such perfection of evocative reticence as the fragment of the *Eve of St. Mark*. It stands midway in his stories, and seems to tie his younger and his older selves together by including within it bits of both. It speaks volumes for the excellent poetry of a great deal of it, and the dramatic quality of the whole, that, in spite of the lapses of which I have spoken, the interest in it never even so much as wavers throughout. Certain lines of the poem are in Keats's best and most original vein. For instance, when *Lamia* arrives near Corinth:

"... There she stood
About a young bird's flutter from a wood."

Or this, when he is speaking of the city:

"As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all,
Throughout her palaces imperial,
And all her populous streets and temples lewd,
Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance brew'd,
To the wide-spreaded night above her towers."

Or the mention of the passers-by in the streets, who

"Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white."

Keats knew the excellent effect of his "shuffled"; he employed it again in the *Eve of St. Mark.*

Nowhere has Keats used his extraordinary sense of colour with more skill than in *Lamia.* What could be better than this description of the serpent?

"She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
Vermillion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd;
And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,
Dissolv'd, or brighter shone, or interwreathed
Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries —
So rain-bow sided, touch'd with miseries,

.

Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar."

Here is another passage, where the reflection of a bright light in polished marble is exactly evoked by one miraculous epithet:

"A pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door,
Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor glow
Reflected in the slabbed steps below,
Mild as a star in water."

For the mingling of line with colour, as well as an illustration of Keats's keen sense of proportion, the description of the banqueting-hall is exceptionally fine even when we compare it to his other work of the sort. It should be read first for pleasure, but afterwards with an eye for these qualities, since the passage reveals its full beauty only when we take note of them.

As a postscript to this Sunday letter to Taylor, Keats wrote: "Brown is going to Chister and Bedhampton a visiting. I shall be alone here for three weeks." It was probably on Monday or Tuesday that Brown started off on what purported to be a visit to old Mr. Dilke and the Snooks. He did go to both these places, but he went somewhere else too, and of this somewhere he told Keats nothing, indeed there is every reason to believe that he never told him. It was during this three weeks that he went over to Ireland and contracted the illegal marriage with Abigail Donohue.[1] Why Brown did not confide in Keats is obvious; Keats was an unusually honourable man, and he would never have countenanced Brown's dastardly behaviour. He would either have made Brown marry the woman in earnest or have broken with him for good; he had broken with Bailey for far less. What a blow like this would have meant to Keats at this juncture, it is horrible to think; and yet to know him so much cheated in the quality of his friend is very unpleasant also. Brown's other friends, who learnt of this episode in his life much later, after Keats's death, forgave him; perhaps there were extenuating circumstances in the character of the woman and Brown's ethical tenets. Still it is hard to look with a kindly eye on his cowardice in regard to Keats, who was always so open with him.

On the Friday after writing to Taylor, Keats received an alarming letter from George. It contained the dire news that George's worst fears were realized, the boat had been

[1] See Vol. I, p. 471. From an Unpublished Memoir by his son, C. A. Brown. Day Collection.

traced to the bottom of the Ohio River and all the money which George had taken away with him was definitely gone. A certain Mr. Bakewell, a Louisville acquaintance, had lent him money for temporary needs, but his financial affairs would be a total wreck if his share of Tom's portion of their joint patrimony could not be got out of Abbey somehow. With characteristic energy, Keats promptly determined to have no more to do with letters, but to go up to town at once and have an interview with Abbey. He left Winchester at nine o'clock that same evening, and was duly landed at the Bell and Crown Inn, Holburn, at nine o'clock on Saturday morning, September eleventh. I admit that I have arrived at these hours from deduction chiefly. There were only two night coaches from Southampton in 1819, and one was the mail. If Keats took the mail, he would have had to pay more than if he went by the other coach, also he says: "I came by the Friday night coach," not the "Friday night mail." It makes very little odds which conveyance he went by. Both ran to the same London inn, the only difference was that the mail left Winchester an hour later than the night coach, and arrived at the Bell and Crown two hours earlier.

Keats, suddenly pulled out of the studious solitude of Winchester, found that "London appeared a very odd place." He said afterwards that it took him a whole day before he could "feel among men." His first act was to write to Abbey and ask for an interview. Abbey was quite decent about this and invited him to "drink tea" and discuss business at seven o'clock on the following Monday. Here then were two whole days and a part of a third to be got through somehow. It might be thought that he would have betaken himself at once to the Brawnes' in Hampstead, but this was just what he did not do. Why, we shall see in a moment. Instead, he cast round in his mind which of his friends he should look up, and discovered that "there was not one house" he "felt any pleasure to call at." Reynolds

had gone to Devonshire, the Dilkes were away in the country, Taylor was at Retford. He "walked about the streets as in a strange land." Rice was the only one at home, and with him he passed some time. The melancholy sojourn together at Shanklin had by no means dampened Keats's affectionate interest in Rice; on the contrary, Rice was still "the most sensible and even wise man I know," and of him he could still say with sober warmth: "We are great friends, and there is no one I like to pass a day with better." While Keats was at Rice's, Martin dropped in to say good-bye before going to Dublin, and the three cracked jokes together and recalled the Shanklin days which all three had shared. Keats saw Haslam too, but found him "very much occupied with love and business." He showed Keats a picture (presumably a miniature) of his inamorata by Severn, which Keats did not take to. His opinion of the young lady, as the picture discovered her, he expressed in this pregnant phrase: "I think she is though not very cunning, too cunning for him." Keats was in no mood to be sympathetic with lovers. A few days later he wrote to George:

> "A man in love I do think cuts the sorriest figure in the world; queer, when I know a poor fool to be really in pain about it, I could burst out laughing in his face . . . Not that I take Haslam as a pattern for lovers; he is a very worthy man and a good friend. His love is very amusing."

Among other doings of this Saturday, Keats dropped in at 93 Fleet Street, Taylor and Hessey's shop, where he saw Woodhouse, who invited him to breakfast with him the next day at his chambers in the Temple. On Sunday then, Keats breakfasted with Woodhouse and stayed with him all the morning, he even accompanied him to the Swan with Two Necks Inn in Lad Lane and saw him off in the Accommodation Post Coach for Weymouth at three. After this, he dined with Mrs. Wylie in Henrietta Street. And so passed Sunday.

On Monday, Keats at last brought himself to write to Fanny Brawne. It was surely time, he had not written to her since August sixteenth, and his being in London and not going to see her certainly called for an explanation. He gave it, honestly and painfully; and once again we must admire Fanny Brawne, who seems to have understood and forgiven. After telling her that it was a letter from George which had brought him to town, he continues:

> "Am I mad or not? I came by the Friday night coach and have not yet been to Hampstead. Upon my soul it is not my fault. I cannot resolve to mix any pleasure with my days: they go one like another, undistinguishable. If I were to see you to-day it would destroy the half comfortable sullenness I enjoy at present into downright perplexities. I love you too much to venture to Hampstead, I feel it is not paying a visit, but venturing into a fire. *Que feraije?* as the French novel writers say in fun, and I in earnest: really what can I do? Knowing well that my life must be passed in fatigue and trouble, I have been endeavouring to wean myself from you: for to myself alone what can be much of a misery? As far as they regard myself I can despise all events: but I cannot cease to love you. This morning I scarcely know what I am doing. I am going to Walthamstow. I shall return to Winchester tomorrow; whence you shall hear from me in a few days. I am a Coward, I cannot bear the pain of being happy: 'tis out of the question: I must admit no thought of it."

Keats did go to Walthamstow that morning, where he found his sister looking better than he had seen her for some time, but he did not go back to Winchester until Wednesday, and he did not write to Fanny Brawne "in a few days." It was nearly a month before she heard from him again, but then they met, and the fog which Keats had spread between them was cleared away.

I have called it selfishness which kept Keats from writing to Miss Brawne for so long, and so it undoubtedly was in the beginning. But George's unfortunate news puts a

rather different complexion on the case. If Keats were protecting himself before, it was Fanny Brawne even more than himself whom he was protecting now. That he had nothing to offer her, no possible hope of marriage for years to come to bring to her, was becoming increasingly evident. We shall see his attitude very clearly between the lines of a letter to George which he wrote on his return to Winchester. But it should be noticed that he could not force himself to hint that she would be wise to break off the engagement. Things were pretty hopeless, but not yet hopeless enough for that. It was not only "fire" which he feared to find at Hampstead, it was the necessity of telling Miss Brawne how matters stood, and he shrank at the mere thought of this necessity. He simply could bear no more, and especially not that. He must hold to his shred of happiness a little longer and things must take their course, even although that course meant a passive cruelty in regard to her. In fairness to him, however, we must remember that he could not figure his mere silence as a cruelty, because of the blind spot in his mind to which I have already referred.

Seven o'clock on Monday evening found him drinking tea in Pancras Lane with Abbey. Abbey was really disturbed at hearing what Keats had to say, and having read a part of George's letter which Keats showed him expressed himself as greatly concerned. "He will apply to Mr. Glidden the partner, endeavour to get rid of Mr. Jennings's claim, and be expeditious," Keats later told George. Keats speaks of "Mr. Jennings's claim," I suppose he calls it so from the fact that Lieutenant Jennings's widow derived her claim through her husband. I do not understand that Keats's aunt, Mrs. Jennings, had a son, and her husband had long been dead.

Business disposed of, Abbey turned to lighter matters. In Keats's words:

> "He began blowing up Lord Byron while I was sitting with him: 'However, may be the fellow says true things

> now and then,' at which he took up a magazine, and read me some extracts from Don Juan (Lord Byron's last flash poem), and particularly one against literary ambition."

After Keats had left Abbey, he started to walk up Cheapside, but returning to put some letters in the post encountered Abbey again. This walk Keats describes with a good deal of amusement to George:

> "We walked together through the Poultry as far as the hatter's shop he has some concern in. He spoke of it in such a way to me, I thought he wanted me to make an offer to assist him in it. I do believe if I could be a hatter I might be one."

A mad hatter, indeed, he would have been, and he did not make the offer.

Tuesday is a blank. We know nothing about it, nor why Keats changed his mind about going back to Winchester on that day. The only farther details we have concerning these September days in town are that on one of the evenings of his stay he went to Covent Garden at half price, and that in passing Colinagni the print-seller's window he saw "a profile portrait of Sandt, the destroyer of Kotzebue," which seemed to him "like a young Abelard." On Wednesday, he returned to Winchester, having received a promise from Abbey that he would let him know how affairs proceeded, and arranged that if they went well he should again go up to town and instruct Abbey how to forward whatever could be sent to the very remote spot known as Louisville, Kentucky, in the back provinces of the United States of America.

When I spoke of this bird's-eye view of Keats's doings as being all we know of the town visit, I meant all the main facts, for we have an abundance of detail concerning one of Keats's engagements, and this detail carries with it a most interesting sequel. Woodhouse, on reaching Weymouth, wrote to Taylor, and from this letter and Taylor's reply I

propose to quote at some length. Woodhouse's letter,[1] part of it, is as follows, he dates it "Weymouth, Monday 20 Sept. 1819":

> "I left Town on Sunday Evening (12th) & arrived here on the Monday about 1 . . . Keats was in Town the day before I left. He came into 93 unexpectedly, while I was in the midst of a recapitulation to Hessey of the strong points of the matter between yourselves and the Capt . . . K. came about his Chancery Suit that is to be: or rather that is not to be, if he succeeds in the object of his journey to London; which is to dissuade some old aunt from going into that Court. — He took his breakfast with me on the Sunday, and remained with me till I stept into the coach for this place at 3 o'clock. I was much gratified with his company. He wanted I believe to publish the Eve of St. Agnes & Lamia *immediately*: but Hessey told him it could not answer to do so now. I wondered why he said nothing of Isabella: & assured him it would please more than the Eve of St. Agnes — He said he could not bear the former now. It appeared to him mawkish. This certainly cannot be so. The feeling is very likely to come across an author on review of a former work of his own, particularly where the objects of his present meditations are of a more sobered & unpassionate character. The feeling of mawkishness seems to be that which comes upon us where anything of great tenderness & excessive simplicity is met with when we are not in a sufficiently tender & simple frame of mind to bear it: when we experience a sort of revulsion, or resiliency (if there be such a word) from the sentiment or expression. Now I believe there is nothing in the most passionate parts of Isabella to excite this feeling. It may, as may Lear, leave the reader far behind: but there is none of the sugar & butter sentiment, that cloys & disgusts. He had the 'Eve of St. A." copied fair. He has made trifling alterations, inserted an additional stanza early in the poem to make the *legend* more intelligible, and correspondent with what afterwards takes place, particularly with respect to the

[1] Morgan Collection. Partly published in Sir Sidney Colvin's *Life of John Keats*. Third Edition.

supper & the playing on the lute. — he retains the name of Porphyro — has altered the last 3 lines to leave on the reader a sense of pettish disgust, by bringing old Angela in (only) dead stiff & ugly. He says he likes that the poem should leave off with this change of sentiment — it was what he aimed at, & was glad to find from my objections to it that he has succeeded. — I apprehend he had a fancy for trying his hand at an attempt to play with his reader & fling him off at last — I sho'd have thought he affected the 'Don Juan' style of swinging up sentiment & sneering: but that he had before asked Hessey if he co'd procure him a sight of that work, as he had not met with it, and if the E. of St. A. had not in all probability been altered before his Lordship had then flown in the face of the public. There was another alteration, which I abused for "a full hour by the *Temple* clock." You know if a thing has a decent side, I generally look no further — As the Poem was origi'y written, *we* innocent ones (ladies & myself) might very well have supposed that Porphyro, when acquainted with Madeline's love for him, & when 'he arose, Etherial flush'd &c. &c. (turn to it) set himself at once to persuade her to go off with him, & succeeded & went over the 'Dartmoor black' (now changed for some other place) to be married in right honest chaste & sober wise. But, as it is now altered, as soon as M. has declared her love, P. winds by degrees his arm round her, presses breast to breast, and acts all the acts of a bonâfide husband, while she fancies she is only playing the part of a wife in a dream. This alteration is of about 3 stanzas; and tho' there are no improper expressions but all is left to inference, and tho' profanely speaking, the Interest on the reader's imagination is greatly heightened, yet I do apprehend it will render the poem unfit for ladies, & indeed scarcely to be mentioned to them among the 'things that are.' He says he does not want ladies to read his poetry: that he writes for men — & that if in the former poem there was an opening for a doubt what took place, it was his fault for not writing clearly & comprehensibly — that he sh'd despise a man who would be such an eunuch in sentiment as to leave a maid, with that character about her, in such a situation: & sh'd despise himself to write about

&c.&c.&c. — and all this sort of Keats-like rhodomontade. — But you will see the work I dare say.

He then read to me Lamia, which he has half fair-copied: the rest is rough. I was much pleased with it. I can use no other terms for you know how badly he reads his own poetry: & you know how slow I am in catching, even the sense of poetry read by the best reader for the 1st time. And his poetry really must be studied to be properly appreciated. The story is to this effect. Hermes is hunting for a nymph, when from a wood he hears his name & a song relating to his loss — Mercury finds out that it comes from a serpent, who promises to show him his nymph if he will turn the serpent into a woman: This he agrees to: upon which the serpent breathes on his eyes when he sees his nymph who had been beside them listening invisibly. The serpent had seen a young man of Corinth with whom she had fallen desperately in love — She is metamorphosed into a beautiful woman, the change is quite Ovidian, but better — she then finds the youth, & they live together in a palace in the middle of Corinth (described, or rather pictured out in very good costume) the entrance of which no one can see (like the cavern Prince Ahmed found in the Arabian Nights when searching for his lost arrow.) There they live & love, 'the world forgetting: of the world forgot.' He wishes to marry her & introduce her to his friends as his wife. But this would be a forfeiture of her immortality & she refuses — at length (for says K. — 'women love to be forced to do a thing, by a fine fellow — *such as this* — I forget his name — was) she consents. The Palace door becomes visible — to the 'astonishment of the natives' — the friends are invited to the wedding-feast — & K. wipes the cits & the low-lived ones: of some of whom he says 'who make their mouth a napkin to their thumb' in the midst of this Imperial splendour. The lover had seen his tutor Appollonius that morning, while in a car with his Lamia; he had a scowl on his brow, which makes the hearts of the lovers sink; & she asks him, who that frowning old fellow was, as soon as A. passed. — He appears at the feast: damps the joy of the two by his presence — sits over against the woman: He is a Magician. He looks earnestly

at the woman: so intently & to such effect, that she reads in his eyes that she is discovered: & vanishes away, shrieking. The lover is told that she was a 'Lamia' & goes mad for the loss of her, & dies. You may suppose all these events have given K. scope for some beautiful poetry: which even in this cursory hearing of it, came every now & then upon me & made me 'start, as tho' a sea nymph quired.' The metre is Drydenian heroic — with many triplets, & many alexandrines. But this K. observed, & I agreed, was required, as rather quite in character with the language & sentiment in those particular parts. K. has a fine feeling when & where he may use poetical licenses with effect. He very kindly reproached me with never writing to him. You may suppose I promised amendment & stipulated (as Paddy says) 'that all the reciprocity should not be on one side.' The last thing, as he shook me by the hand, he promised to drop me a line to Bath: 'and if (said he) *it should be in verse*, I dare say you will forgive me.' He parted with me at the Coach door. I had the inside all to myself: and I amused myself with diving into a deep reverie, & recalling all that had passed during the 6 hours we were tête à tête. I make no apology for stuffing my letter with these Keatsiana. I am sure nothing else I could say would have half the interest. And I deem myself in luck to have such a subject to write about."

The receipt of this letter threw the prudish Taylor into a state of real agitation. The odd attitude of the times, which dared do almost anything and dared say almost nothing, is exemplified in Taylor's answer. Keats's three stanzas appear to be lost, the only hint of them is contained in two very mild cancelled lines:

"See while she speaks his arms encroaching slow
Have zon'd her, heart to heart — loud, loud the dark winds blow."

It seems impossible that anything so innocuous as this could have shocked Woodhouse and Taylor, even making allowance for the times, and therefore I think we must

believe that Keats eventually destroyed the offending stanzas.

Taylor's letter,[1] so much of it as refers to Keats, runs in this wise:

"Bakewell Sat 25th Sep 1819.

MY DEAR DICK,

Your welcome Letter has just reached me, having been forwarded in a parcel from Retford, which place I left last Tuesday. — I sit down to reply to it, more perhaps to express my regret at what you tell me of the Changes in the Eve of St. Agnes, than for any deliberate purpose of saying my say on things in general. — This Folly of Keats is the most Stupid piece of Folly I can conceive. — He does not bear the ill opinion of the world calmly, & yet he will not allow it to form a good opinion of Him & his writings. He repented of this Conduct when Endymion was published as much as a Man can repent, who shows by the accidental Expression of Disappointment, Mortification & Disgust that he has met with a Result different from that which he had anticipated — Yet he will again challenge the same Neglect or Censure, & again (I pledge my Discernment on it) be vexed at the Reception he has prepared for himself. — This Vaporing is as far from sound Fortitude, as the Conduct itself in the Instances before us, is devoid of good Feeling and good Sense. — I don't know how the Meaning of the new Stanzas is wrapped up, but I will not be accessory (I can answer also for H. I think) towards publishing anything which can only be read by Men, since even on their Minds a bad Effect must follow the Encouragement of those thoughts which cannot be raised without Impropriety. —

If it was so natural a process in Keats's Mind to carry on the Train of his Story in the way he has done, that he could not write decently, if he had that Disease of the Mind which renders the Perception too dull to discover Right from Wrong in Matters of moral Taste, I should object equally then as now to the Sanctioning of the Infirmity by an act of cool Encouragement on my part, but then he

[1] Author's Collection.

would be personally perhaps excusable — As it is, the flying in the Face of all Decency & Discretion is doubly offensive from its being accompanied with so preposterous a Conceit on his part of being able to overcome the best found Habits of our Nature. — Had he known truly what the Society and what the Suffrages of Women are worth, he would never have thought of depriving himself of them. — So far as he is unconsciously silly in this Proceeding I am sorry for him, but for the rest I cannot but confess to you that it excites in me the Strongest Sentiments of Disapprobation — Therefore my dear Dick if he will not so far concede to my wishes as to leave the passage as it originally stood, I must be content to admire his Poems with some other Imprint, & in so doing I can reap as much Delight from the Perusal of them as if they were our own property, without having the disquieting Consideration attached to them of our approving, by the 'Imprimateur,' those Parts which are unfit for publication. —

You will think me too severe again. Well then; I will suspend my Judgment till I see or hear more, but if these my present Views are shown to be no Illusion I must act as I have described — How strange too that he should have taken such a Dislike to Isabella — I still think of it exactly as you do, & from what he copied out of Lamia in a late Letter I fancy I shall prefer it to that poem also. — The Extract he gave me was from the Feast: I did not enter so well into it as to be qualified to criticise, but whether it be a want of Taste for such Subjects as Fairy Tales, or that I do not perceive true Poetry except it is in Conjunction with good Sentiment I cannot tell but it did not promise to please me. —"

After reading these two letters, we can understand why Keats found Brown's society so refreshing. If Brown acted too much as he talked, at least he was all of a piece, a good, square, burly piece of robustious human nature. Yet, by this letter of his, we can see that Taylor was no fool. He put his finger at once on Keats's weak spot, that his cynicism was merely bitterness born of hurt feelings. He

did not like the lines from *Lamia* which Keats had sent him, and no wonder when we see what they were, which I believe no living person but myself has yet done. What possible passage in the poem can Woodhouse refer to when he quotes that egregious remark of someone's mouth being a napkin to his thumb? The extract from Keats's letter of September fifth as published by Buxton Forman contains nothing of all this. But Buxton Forman is careful to explain that, in the copy of the letter sent him, the lines from *Lamia* were not given, and that he has made them up from an early manuscript found among Lord Houghton's papers. Now the lines quoted in the original letter[1] are very different from Buxton Forman's guess at them. The passage begins with the line:

"A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone"

and continues for fifty-eight lines. It differs in several places from the version afterwards published, but it is not until the line beginning "Soft went the music" is reached that it ceases entirely to accord with it. From then to the final line copied in the letter, there is no resemblance between what Keats sent to Taylor and read to Woodhouse and the poem as we know it. This is what Taylor read and Woodhouse listened to:

"Soft went the music, and the tables all
Sparkled beneath the viewless banneral
Of Magic; and dispos'd in double row
Seem'd edged Parterres of white bedded snow,
Adorn'd along the sides with living flowers
Conversing, laughing after sunny showers:
And, as the pleasant appetite entic'd
Gush came the wine, and sheer the meats were slic'd.
Soft went the Music; the flat salver sang
Kiss'd by the emptied goblet, — and again it rang:
Swift bustled by the servants: — here's a health

[1] Author's Collection.

Cries one — another — then, as if by stealth,
A Glutton drains a cup of Helicon,
Too fast down, down his throat the brief delight is gone.
'Where is that Music?' cries a Lady fair.
'Aye, where is it my dear? Up in the air?'
Another whispers. 'Poo!' saith Glutton 'Mum!'
Then makes his shiny mouth a napkin for his thumb.
&c. &c. &c."

If Keats had been altering the *Eve of St. Agnes* in this vein, we cannot be too thankful to Woodhouse and Taylor for suppressing him.

Keats returned to Winchester on Wednesday, September fifteenth, with his head full of plans and perplexities and no one to talk them over with, for Brown was still away. Two days later, on Friday, he began a letter to George which rambled on for ten days. I have already quoted somewhat from it, and shall quote more as necessity arises. The first part of this letter is taken up with an account of his visit to town, in the midst of which, apropos of Haslam, Keats breaks into one of his impromptu jingles, the one named by some subsequent editor *A Party of Lovers*. Keats calls these lines "a few nonsense verses" and they are no more. The type of tea-table lover here lampooned cannot even be considered as a result of Keats's unhappy musings on his own condition.

But Keats was not always unhappy. The next slice of the letter, written on Saturday, records one of those strange veerings from grave to gay to which he was mercifully subject. He begins:

> "With my inconstant disposition it is no wonder that this morning, amid all our bad times and misfortunes, I should feel so alert and well-spirited . . . It is because my hopes are ever paramount to my dispair."

Perhaps this was the reason of his high spirits, but is it not more likely, in the present instance, that a comforting

letter from Fanny Brawne in answer to his note of the Monday before may have had something to do with it? Whether the high spirits were cause or effect, they are closely related to a re-reading of *Lamia* which he had just been engaged upon. Here is his opinion of that poem:

> "I have been reading over a part of a short poem I have composed lately, called Lamia, and I am certain there is that sort of fire in it which must take hold of people in some way. Give them either pleasant or unpleasant sensation — what they want is sensation of some sort."

Sunday seems to have been largely spent in going over and revising the fragment of the *Eve of St. Mark*, begun the February before at Hampstead, for on Monday he ushers in a copy of it to George by means of this enchanting prologue:

> "This day is a grand day for Winchester. They elect the Mayor. It was indeed high time the place should have some sort of excitement. There was nothing going on — all asleep. Not an old maid's sedan returning from a card party; and if any old women have got tipsy at christenings, they have not exposed themselves in the street. The first night, tho', of our arrival here there was a slight uproar took place at about ten of the clock. We heard distinctly a noise patting down the street, as of a walking-cane of the good old dowager breed; and a little minute after we heard a less voice observe, 'What a noise the ferril made — it must be loose.' Brown wanted to call the constables, but I observed it was only a little breeze, and would soon pass over. The side streets here are excessively maiden-lady-like, the doorsteps always fresh from the flannel. The knockers have a very staid, serious, nay almost awful quietness about them. I never saw so quiet a collection of lions' and rams' heads. The doors most part black, with a little brass handle just above the keyhole, so that you may easily shut yourself out of your own house. He! He! There is none of your Lady Bellaston ringing and rapping here; no thundering Jupiter-footmen, no opera-treble tattoos, but a mod-

> est lifting up of the knocker by a set of little wee old fingers that peep through grey mittens, and a dying fall thereof. The great beauty of poetry is that it makes everything, every place, interesting. The palatine Venice and the abbotine Winchester are equally interesting. Some time since I began a poem called 'The Eve of St. Mark,' quite in the spirit of town quietude. I think it will give you the sensation of walking about an old country town in a coolish evening. I know not whether I shall ever finish it; I will give it as far as I have gone."

Here follows the *Eve of St. Mark*, and after it Keats remarks: "I hope you will like this for all its carelessness." Like it! To some of us in this day and age, *St. Mark* ranks so high among Keats's works as to be the equal of any, be the other what it may. Rossetti considered it as "perhaps, with *La Belle Dame sans Merci* the chastest and choicest example of his maturing manner."[1] It is certainly that; the poem exhibits all Keats's virtues and practically none of his faults. Not a trace of his youthful sentimentality disfigures it. Story, atmosphere, colour, line, imagination, human interest, we have all these elements at their best in the hundred and nineteen lines of this fragment. It is as nearly perfect of its kind as a poem can be. The opening lines are a marvel of reticent presentation. There is not a redundant word, and not a word too few. I think no picture which Keats has given us quite equals this:

> "Upon a Sabbath-day it fell;
> Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell,
> That call'd the folk to evening prayer;
> The city streets were clean and fair
> From wholesome drench of April rains;
> And, on the western window panes,
> The chilly sunset faintly told
> Of unmatur'd green vallies cold,
> Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,
> Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge,

[1] Quoted by Buxton Forman. Complete Edition.

Of primroses by shelter'd rills,
And daisies on the aguish hills.
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell:
The silent streets were crowded well
With staid and pious companies,
Warm from their fire-side orat'ries;
And moving, with demurest air,
To even-song, and vesper prayer.
Each arched porch, and entry low,
Was fill'd with patient folk and slow,
With whispers hush, and shuffling feet,
While play'd the organ loud and sweet."

There is no need to comment on poetry such as that; it is its own commentary. I shall only ask my readers to notice how the bell, clanging once, twice, at a carefully spaced interval, gives just the effect of a real bell, slowly, regularly sounding through the damp evening air, above the continuous murmur of shuffling feet, and how it harmonizes with, and breaks in upon, the tones of the organ. So excellent is this poem that one longs to quote it all, from the sheer difficulty of choosing parts. Since I cannot do that, I shall quote no more. It must be read, and read with attention, surrendering one's self to its swift, although gentle, changes of effect. *St. Mark* is a quiet poem, and it must be read with a quiet heart and a mind smooth and ready to take impressions, so that we may not merely read, but *see*, first the Minster square, then the panelled room with the young girl reading her great illuminated book, then the book itself and its strange pictures and crooked mediæval script. Scholars take great pleasure in informing us that Keats's attempt at Middle English is no English at all, unless it be Chatterton's. It may be well to know this as a matter of curiosity; from the poetical point of view, it is of no importance whatever. *St. Mark* is a perfect thing no matter how incorrect it may be historically, criticism on that score is of no moment here.

The tale is based on another old legend, one peculiar to the evening before the day dedicated to St. Mark, which falls on April twenty-fifth. According to this legend, any one standing beside the door of a church on the evening in question will see entering it the apparitions of those persons belonging to the parish who are doomed to die during the coming year.

Rossetti was the first person to point out that Keats's fragment undoubtedly referred to this superstition;[1] and that his surmise was correct, was proved by the discovery of a portion of another manuscript of the poem by Buxton Forman in 1906. This passage also occurs copied out by Woodhouse in one of his Commonplace Books.[2] I give it here from Professor de Sélincourt's fourth edition of Keats's *Poems*:

"Gif ye wol stonden hardie wight —
Amiddes of the blacke night —
Righte in the churchè porch, pardie
Ye wol behold a companie
Appouchen thee full dolourouse
For sooth to sain from everich house
Be it in City or village
Wol come the Phantom and image
Of ilka geat and ilka carl
Whom coldè Deathè hath in parle
And wol some day that very year
Touchen with foulè venime spear
And sadly do them all to die —
Hem all shalt thou see verilie —
And everichon shall by thee pass
All who must die that year Alas."

Sir Sidney Colvin is greatly exercised to discover whether the setting of the poem itself be mediæval or modern. The former it certainly cannot be; as to the latter, it depends upon what interpretation one gives to the word "modern."

[1] Buxton Forman. Complete Edition.
[2] Woodhouse (*Poems II.*) Crewe Collection. Discovered in 1913.

The setting of *St. Mark* need not be exactly of Keats's time, but it as certainly dates to some period subsequent to the making of Sunday a solemn day rather than a gay one. Once again, it does not matter. Nothing matters here but the extraordinary beauty of the poem itself.

It is unfortunate that we have no means of determining how much of this fragment was composed in February, and how much was done in September. We have already observed Keats's remarkable versatility in changing from one atmosphere to another in the shortest possible time. For a man who could sandwich *Otho* in between the two parts of *Lamia*, the jump from *Lamia* to *St. Mark* presents no sort of obstacle. On the whole, I think the change of mood from *St. Agnes' Eve* to the *Eve of St. Mark* was a more difficult feat to perform. Keats had been working over *St. Agnes' Eve* in February, but he had also been working on it in September. However we look at it, *St. Mark* stands apart and by itself. No other of his narratives has quite this touch, the nearest approach to it is the ode *To Autumn* which was apparently also done on this Sunday.

It is curious to note how much more mature in many ways *St. Mark* is than *Lamia*. It, and the ode *To Autumn*, reflect more clearly what Keats was at this moment than does that poem with its occasional returns to his earlier manner. Keats himself gives us the key in that part of his letter to George written on Tuesday, September twenty-first. He says:

> "From the time you left me our friends say I have altered completely — am not the same person . . . Some think I have lost that poetical ardour and fire 'tis said I once had — The fact is, perhaps I have; but, instead of that, I hope I shall substitute a more thoughtful and quiet power. I am more frequently now contented to read and think, but now and then haunted with ambitious thoughts. Quieter in my pulse, improved in my digestion, exerting myself against vexing speculations, scarcely content to

> write the best verses for the fever they leave behind. I want to compose without this fever. I hope I one day shall. You would scarcely imagine I could live alone so comfortably — 'Kepen in solitarinesse.'"

The quotation from *St. Mark* links this passage to the poem, as, indeed, we know it to have been linked from the beginning. In *St. Mark*, the altered Keats stands forth very plainly. I imagine he never finished the poem from the knowledge that he could not do so without undergoing the fever he dreaded. Cool as the fragment sounds, it cannot have been written without heat; but the energy required to carry on and finish a sustained poem, such as *St. Mark* must have been, is greater than that needed to begin it. This Keats knew, and the poem was never completed. Poetry cannot be written without fever. The creation of a work of art in any form is a terribly exhausting thing. An artist in normal health is none the worse for this exhaustion in the long run; and he is sustained through it by the immensely tonic and bracing effect inherent in the act of creation. One sensation relieves the other, and in the end both together bring him back without injury to an even plane. The life of an artist is made up of these rises and falls of temperature. He is like a man whose work necessitates a deprivation of sleep on certain nights in the week which he is accustomed to make up on others.

Keats's difficulty lay in the fact that he was not in normal health. He was in no state to stand successive shocks to his nervous system. It took him too long to recover, his resiliance was entirely sapped by illness. Every poem he wrote shook his vitality to its foundations, and slowly, steadily, it gave way, until he was powerless to live and write, and the writing had to go. I have called this chapter "A Tide and its Undertow" advisedly. Mentally, he was in the heyday of maturing force. Had he been well,

it is quite evident that an almost torrential flow of poetry was due, and that his happiness would have been in giving vent to it. Desperately ill as he was, it was only a question which could keep the upper hand, the power of creation, or the debility of disease, one constantly pushing him forward, the other forever pulling him back. Not until this Summer at Shanklin and Winchester did his dual condition assume the aspect of a real struggle, and this, sure to come at last as it was, might have been postponed a little longer had not the wrench away from Fanny Brawne weakened his energy in other directions by just the amount needed to fight his misery. Effort became a huge monster seeking to destroy him. He made a gallant resistance, but escape he could not. From this time on he fought a losing battle.

It was only by fits and starts at this period, however, that Keats was aware of his own growing inertia. Immediately after his return to Winchester he was in unusually good spirits for a while. For a brief moment, poetry had an inning. The weather was beautiful, and he thought he had hit upon a plan which would do away with some, if not all, of his troubles. I will come to that presently.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, Keats did a deal of letter writing. To Dilke he wrote: "Whatever I take to for the time I cannot leave off in a hurry; letter writing is the go now; I have consumed a quire at least." Some of this quire went to Reynolds and some to Woodhouse. At the moment, he was so much in love with Winchester, and his description of it sent to George, that he copied it to Reynolds on Tuesday, adding:

> "How beautiful the season is now — How fine the air — a temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather — Dian skies — I never liked stubble-field so much as now — Aye better than the chilly green of Spring. Somehow, a stubble-field looks warm — in the

same way that some pictures look warm. This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it."

What he composed was the ode *To Autumn*. His reference to the "chilly green of Spring," points clearly to the *Eve of St. Mark*. I imagine him to have been working at *St. Mark* before his walk, and that, on coming in, he immediately wrote *To Autumn* as a sort of companion piece and antithesis. There is another correspondence between the two poems in this sentence of the letter, which follows shortly after the one I have quoted:

"I always somehow associate Chatterton with autumn. He is the purest writer in the English Language. He has no French idiom or particles, like Chaucer — 'tis genuine English Idiom in English words."

It has long been known that Keats copied out the ode *To Autumn* in the letter written that same day to Woodhouse, but for many years this letter was supposed to be irrecoverably lost, as all trace of it had vanished. It was my good fortune to buy it, quite unwittingly, with a number of other letters written by Keats, over twenty years ago, but I have only recently discovered its history. This whole collection of letters was bequeathed by Woodhouse to Taylor, and on Taylor's death passed into the possession of a niece who, many years later, sold them at auction. They were bought by a London book-seller from whom I purchased them. I allowed this "lost" letter to be printed in the *Keats Memorial Volume*, and I reproduce it here directly from the original.[1]

"Tuesday.

DEAR WOODHOUSE,

If you see what I have said to Reynolds before you come to your own dose you will put it between the bars unread;

[1] At the time the copy was made for the *Keats Memorial Volume*, I was ill and unable to go over the transcription, which, I fear, contained errors. The letter as here printed is absolutely correct.

provided they have begun fires in Bath. I should like a bit of fire to night — one likes a bit of fire. How glorious the Blacksmith's shops look now. I stood to night before one till I was very near listing for one. Yes I should like a bit of fire — at a distance about 4 feet 'not quite hob nob' — as wordsworth says. The fact was I left Town on Wednesday — determined to be in a hurry. You don't eat travelling — you're wrong — beef — beef — I like the look of a sign. The Coachman's face says eat eat, eat. I never feel more contemptible than when I am sitting by a goodlooking coachman. One is nothing. Perhaps I eat to persuade myself I am somebody. You must be when slice after slice — but it wont do — the Coachman nibbles a bit of bread — he's favour'd — he's had a Call — a Hercules Methodist. Does he live by bread alone? O that I were a Stage Manager — perhaps that's as old as doubling the Cape. 'How are ye old 'un? hey! why dont'e speak?' O that I had so sweet a Breast to sing as the Coachman hath! I'd give a penny for his Whistle — and bow to the Girls on the road—Bow—nonsense—'tis a nameless graceful slang action. Its effect on the women suited to it must be delightful. It touches 'em in the ribs — en passant — very off hand — very fine — Sed thougum formosa vale vale inquit, Heigho la! You like poetry better — so you shall have some I was going to give Reynolds.

Season of Mists and mellow fruitfulness,
 Close bosom friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
 The vines with fruit that round the thatch eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazle-shells
With a white kernel; to set budding more,
 And still more later flowers for the bees
 Untill they think warm days will never cease
 For summer has o'er brimmed the[i]r clammy Cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft, amid thy stores?
 Sometimes, whoever seeks abroad may find

Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Dased with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a Cyder press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of spring? Aye, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too.
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day
And touch the stubble plains with rosy hue:
Then in a wailful quire the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives and dies;
And full grown Lambs loud bleat from hilly bourne:
Hedge crickets sing, and now with treble soft
The Redbreast whistles from a garden Croft
And gather'd Swallows twitter in the Skies.

I will give you a few lines from Hyperion on account of a word in the last line of a fine sound.

'Mortal! that thou mays't understand aright
I humanize my sayings to thine ear,
Making comparisons of earthly things;
Or thou might'st better listen to the wind
Though it blows *legend-laden* through the trees.

I think you will like the following description of the Temple of Saturn.

I look'd around upon the carved sides
Of an old Sanctuary, with roof august
Builded so high, it seem'd that filmed clouds
Might sail beneath, as o'er the stars of heaven.
So old the place was I remember none
The like upon the earth; what I had seen
Of grey Cathedrals, buttress'd walls, rent towers
The superannuations of sunk realms,

Or nature's rocks hard toil'd in winds and waves,
Seem'd but the failing of decrepit things
To that eternal-domed monument.
Upon the marble, at my feet, there lay
Store of strange vessels and large draperies
Which needs had been of dyed asbestos wove,
Or in that place the moth could not corrupt,
So white the linen, so, in some distinct
Ran imageries from a sombre loom.
All in a mingled heap confused there lay
Robes, golden tongs, censer and chafing dish
Girdles, and chains and holy jewelries.
Turning from these, with awe once more I rais'd
My eyes to fathom the space every way;
The embossed roof, the silent massive range
Of Columns north and south, ending in Mist
Of nothing; then to the eastward where black gates
Were shut against the Sunrise ever more.

I see I have completely lost my direction. So I e'n make you pay double postage. I had begun a sonnet in french of Ronsard — on my word 'tis very capable of poetry. I was stop'd by a circumstance not worth mentioning. I intended to call it La Platonique Chevalresque — I like the second line —

Non ne suis si audace a languire
De m'empresser au cœur nos tendres mains. &c.

Here is what I had written for a sort of induction —

Fanatics have their dreams wherewith they weave
A Paradise for a Sect; the savage too
From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep
Guesses at Heaven: pity these have not
Trac'd upon vellum or wild indian leaf
The shadows of melodious utterance:
But bare of laurel they live, dream, and die,
For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,
With the fine spell of words alone can save
Imagination from the sable charm
And dumb enchantment.

My poetry will never be fit for anything it does n't cover its ground well. You see he she is off her guard and does n't move a peg though Prose is coming up in an awkward style enough. Now a blow in the spondee wo'd finish her but let it get over this line of circumvallation if it can. These are unpleasant Phrase.

Now for all this you two must write me a letter apiece — for as I know you will interread one another. I am still writing to Reynolds as well as yourself. As I say to George I am writing *to* you but *at* your Wife — And dont forget to tell Reynolds of the fairy tale Undine. Ask him if he has read any of the American Brown's[1] novels that Hazlitt speaks so much of. I have read one call'd Wieland — very powerful — something like Godwin. Between Schiller and Godwin. A Domestic prototype of Shiller's Armenian. More clever in plot and incident than Godwin. A strange american scion of the German trunk. Powerful genius — accomplish'd horrors — I shall proceed tomorrow. Wednesday — I am all in a Mess here — embowell'd in Winchester. I wrote two Letters to Brown one from said Place, and one from London, and neither of them has reach'd him. I have written him a long one this morning and am so perplex'd as to be an object to Curiosity to you quiet People. I hire myself a show waggon and a trumpet-our. Here's the wonderful Man whose Letters wont go! — All the infernal imaginary thunderstorms from the Post-office are beating upon me — so that 'unpoeted I write.' Some curious body has detained my Letters. I am sure of it. They know not what to make of me — not an acquaintance in the Place — what can I be about? so they open my Letters. Being in a lodging house, and not so self will'd, but I am a little cowardly I dare not spout my rage against the Ceiling. Besides I should be run through the Body by the major in the next room. I don't think his wife would attempt such a thing. Now I am going to be serious. After revolving certain circumstances in my Mind; chiefly connected with the late american letter — I have determined to take up my abode in a cheap Lodging in Town and get employment in some of our elegant Periodical

[1] Charles Brockden Brown. 1771–1810.

Works. I will no longer live upon hopes. I shall carry my plan into execution speedily — I shall live in Westminster — from which a walk to the British Museum will be noisy and muddy — but otherwise pleasant enough. I shall enquire of Hazlitt how the figures of the market stand. O that I could something agrestunal, pleasant, fountain-voic'd — not plague you with unconnected nonsense — But things won't leave me *alone*. I shall be in Town as soon as either of you. I only wait for an answer from Brown: if he receives mine which is now a very moot point. I will give you a few reasons why I shall persist in not publishing The Pot of Basil. It is too smokeable. I can get it smoak'd at the Carpenters shaving chimney much more cheaply. There is too much inexperience of line, and simplicity of knowledge in it — which might do very well after one's death, but not while one is alive. There are very few would look to the reality. I intend to use more finesse with the Public. It is possible to write fine things which cannot be laugh'd at in any way. Isabella is what I should call were I a reviewer 'A weak-sided Poem' with an amusing sober-sadness about it. Not that I do not think Reynolds and you are quite right about it — it is enough for me. But this will not do to be public. If I may so say, in my dramatic capacity I enter fully into the feeling: but in Propria Persona I should be apt to quiz it myself. There is no objection of this kind to Lamia — A good deal to St. Agnes Eve — only not so glaring. Would as I say I could write you something sylvestian. But I have no time to think: I am an otiosus-preoccupatus Man. I think upon crutches, like the folks in your Pump room. Have you seen old Bramble[1] yet — they say he's on his last legs. The gout did not treat the old Man well so the Physician superseded it, and put the dropsy in office, who gets very fat upon his new employment, and behaves worse than the other to the old Man. But he'll have his house about his ears soon. We shall have another fall of Siege-arms. I suppose Mrs. Humphrey persists in a big-belley — poor thing she little thinks how she is spoiling the corners of her mouth — and making her nose quite a piminy. Mr.

[1] The old squire in Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker*.

Humphrey I hear was giving a Lecture in the gaming-room — when some one call'd out Sponsey! I hear too he has received a challenge from a gentleman who lost that evening. The fact is Mr. H. is a mere nothing out of his Bath-room. Old Tabitha[1] died in being bolstered up for a whist party. They had to cut again. Chowder[2] died long ago — Mrs. H. laments that the last last time they *put him* (i.e. to breed) he didn't take. They say he was a direct descendent of Cupid and Veny in the Spectator. This may be easily known by the Parish Books. If you do not write in the course of a day or two — direct to me at Rice's. Let me know how you pass your times and how you are.

Your sincere friend
JOHN KEATS

Hav'nt heard from Taylor."

There is so much to remark about this letter that I am almost at a loss where to begin. I have already spoken at such length on the ode *To Autumn*, both here and in an earlier chapter,[3] that it is unnecessary to say much more. *To Autumn* ranks with the *Grecian Urn* and the *Nightingale* as one of Keats's best odes. It is important to note how subtly it differs from either of those poems, chiefly from the fact that it is totally devoid of any suggestion beyond itself. There was an undercurrent of meaning and emotion in all the Spring odes which *To Autumn* is conspicuously without. It is picture and no more. Its emotion, so far as it has any, is the mere delight of sensation received through the eyes, ears, nose, and even touch, the touch of wind and sun on an eager skin. *To Autumn* is an almost completely impersonal poem. The poet himself is merely an exquisitely sensitive recording medium. The charm of the poem lies in just this fact, that nothing comes between us and the day Keats wished us to see. There are no echoes, no literary images, all is clear, single, and perfectly attuned. Keats excluded himself, but the artist

[1] Tabitha Bramble, the squire's sister. [2] Tabitha Bramble's dog.
[3] See Vol. I, pp. 503–504.

in him was never more alive. He adds a line to the stanza form of his previous odes, but adds it as penultimate, so keeping his rhyme pattern intact. Oh, the excellent musician that was Keats!

And now I come to *Hyperion*—*Hyperion* which has been dodging past us for so long. I have waited to speak of it until we reached this letter, for, without it, it was impossible to explain all the steps which have led me to a startling discovery. Before revealing this, however, I wish to make a few things quite plain. *Hyperion*, both versions, was written on a theory; it was one of those efforts to discover a direction which we have seen Keats so much occupied with all the previous Autumn and Winter. Keats had conceived the idea of writing a poem on the subject of Hyperion while he was still at work on *Endymion*, but in what form the poem was to be written he took some time to decide. The only thing he seems to have been fully determined about was that it should in no way resemble the form of *Endymion*. Let me state at the outset that I quite agree with Keats in considering the result — or at least one of the results — a failure, the other is too fragmentary to enable us to come to a final decision concerning it.

Keats worked indefatigably at his idea. He tried it, gave it up; tried it on another plan, and gave that up; went back to his first attempt, tinkered — tinkered — but was never satisfied. Keats knew that *Hyperion* was a good imitation of a manner, but felt underneath that the manner did not fit him, that it was stilted and unnatural. He says as much about the second version, the published *Hyperion*, and although illness took him before he had said much about the other, the very little he had done on it, does, I believe, prove my point.

I realize that to students of Keats I make a strange statement in speaking of a version of *Hyperion* begun and abandoned, another begun and left off, and the first taken up again. I am quite aware that recent criticism believes

the published *Hyperion* to have been the poem which Keats started during Tom's illness; and the (so-called) *Fall* or *Vision* of *Hyperion* to be a recast. The authority for this opinion is Brown, who has stated that in the evenings during November and December, 1819, Keats was "remodelling the fragment of 'Hyperion' into the form of a 'Vision.'" I think it very likely that Keats was working on the *Vision* during these months, more likely still that he told Brown he was going to do so, and tried, only to be once more baffled; but I most surely believe that he had begun it much earlier, probably before the other.

Brown was not always accurate in his recollections, and we must constantly remember that these statements of his are the work of a twenty-year-old memory. For instance, in one thing we must suppose him to be either wrong or confused. He told Lord Houghton that *Hyperion* was begun after Tom's death when Keats had come to live with him at Wentworth Place. But was it?

The attempt to unravel Keats's work at Well Walk before Tom's death, and his work at Wentworth Place after Tom's death, is not a little puzzling, but there are certain indications in the letters which may give us a clue. First, there is the letter to Dilke of September twenty-first, 1818, in which Keats describes himself as obliged to "plunge into abstract images" to relieve himself of the thought of Tom. Then there is the sentence in the letter to Reynolds, written on either the same day or the next: "This morning Poetry has conquered — I have relapsed into those abstractions which are my only life," and it can hardly be supposed that the translation from Ronsard, which he quotes shortly after, accounts for all the "abstractions." Finally there is the reference to Saturn and Ops in the letter to Woodhouse of October twenty-seventh, 1818. All this seems to point to some sort of a beginning made on the poem, particularly when we compare these sentences with another in the October, 1818, letter to George, where

he says that he has "too many interruptions to a train of feeling to be able to write Poetry." This looks very much as though he had been trying to write and could not make a go of it. A little later on, we have what I believe to be corroborative proof that Keats had done some of *Hyperion* at Well Walk. Writing to George on a Thursday in December from Wentworth Place, Keats says: "I am passing a Quiet day — which I have not done for a long while — and if I do continue so, I feel I must again begin with my poetry," and under the date of "Friday" (evidently the next day) he adds: "I think you knew before you left England, that my next subject would be 'the fall of Hyperion.' I went on with it a little last night, but it will take some time to get into the vein again." Now here Keats speaks of the poem as "the fall of Hyperion" which he does nowhere else. The manuscript of the *Vision* has disappeared, but in alluding to it in his interleaved copy of *Endymion* Woodhouse calls it *The Fall of Hyperion, a Dream*, and this is the title he gave to his transcript of the poem which Lord Crewe discovered in 1904.[1] It has been suggested, as Professor de Sélincourt points out, that the influence of Dante is very noticeable in the *Fall*, or *Vision* as I shall call it here. In the Summer of 1818, Keats had been reading Cary's translation of Dante on his Scotch tour, what more natural then than that his first attempt at the poem should be, if only slightly, reminiscent of Dante. There is no suggestion whatever of Dante in *Hyperion* proper, and there is no particular reason why there should be, if the poem were begun, as I believe and Brown definitely states, at Wentworth Place. His re-reading of Dante, which produced his Paolo and Francesca sonnet, post-dates any work done on *Hyperion*. My own opinion is that when Keats returned to the *Vision* after Tom's death he found himself unable to recapture his original mood, and therefore started the poem again on an altered plan. Our reasoning has run full circle, and in this

[1] *The Poems of John Keats*, edited by E. de Sélincourt. Fourth Edition.

instance we see Brown to have been at the same time right, wrong, and confused. *Hyperion* was undoubtedly begun at Wentworth Place after Keats had abandoned his first attempt at the subject, which was the *Vision* — so far Brown was right; but he was wrong to suppose the *Vision* to have been the second version of the poem; and he was confused in not realizing that an earlier version than the one he first knew had been started at Well Walk.

But the evidence just presented is by no means all upon which I base my conclusion. There is considerably more. Writing to George on the twenty-first of September, 1819, Keats says: "I shall never become attached to a foreign idiom, so as to put it into my writings. The Paradise Lost, though so fine in itself, is a corruption of our language . . . I have but lately stood on my guard against Milton. Life to him would be death to me . . . I wish to devote myself to another verse alone." The clue to that passage is in the letter written the very next day to Reynolds, where he announces flatly: "I have given up Hyperion — there were too many Miltonic inversions in it." He goes on to ask Reynolds to mark those lines in *Hyperion* which seem to him to contain "the false beauty proceeding from art" and those which have the "true voice of feeling." Already, in April, he had told Woodhouse that he should not go on with the poem, and that this was *Hyperion* is evident from Woodhouse's distinct statement that the fragment consisted of "about 900 lines." The published version has 883 lines, but the *Vision* never got beyond one and a half Cantos, in all 506 lines. We know that Keats's remarks of this sort are not always to be taken as final, and from his saying to Bailey in August: "I have been writing parts of my 'Hyperion,'" I presume that he still had thoughts of returning to it. Now, in Winchester, having glanced over the *Eve of St. Agnes*, worked at it a little and found it good, having written the ode *To Autumn* and found that good also, he was moved to take a look at *Hyperion* and that he

found not good. Hence the decision to abandon it expressed to Reynolds.

Now here is my bomb-shell! The "lines from Hyperion" (at this time, Keats called both versions so indiscriminately) which contained the word "of a fine sound" in this "lost" letter to Woodhouse are the beginning of the Second Canto of the *Vision*, and the "description of the Temple of Saturn," quoted immediately after, are lines 60 to 86 of the First Canto. What does this mean? It means, I think, that, having been disappointed in the effect which the re-reading of *Hyperion* made upon him, he got out what he had written of the *Vision* and was at once struck with its possibilities. I am inclined to think the fragment as it stood ended somewhere in the First Canto, perhaps the whole of the First Canto had been written, and that Keats tried his hand at continuing it then and there; else why should the quotations be out of order. If his "legend-laden" wind were an immediate conception, it was quite natural that he should dash it off to Woodhouse, and go back to the earlier lines afterwards.

That he turned back to the poem again a little later, we see by his quoting the very beginning of Canto I after mentioning the projected French sonnet. Observe that he introduces it by saying: "Here is what I had written for a sort of induction," not "have," as though he had just composed it, but "had," which is, I think, pretty conclusive proof that the lines were old work. There is also another, what we may call a psychological, suggestion here. Keats was reading Ronsard in September, 1818, and it was in the very letter to Reynolds of September twenty-first of that year, the one in which he speaks of relapsing into "those abstractions which are my only life," that he copies his translation of one of Ronsard's sonnets. Now, a year later, he is musing on a sonnet to be written "in french of Ronsard" and suddenly he is reminded of what he was writing the year before just when he was reading Ronsard, it was

the beginning of the *Vision*, whereupon he goes back to his old manuscript again and copies this beginning for Woodhouse. Is it not possible that we have in this reminiscence, if not the actual date, at least one only a few days subsequent to it, of his first putting pen to paper on the subject of Hyperion, for it was also on September twenty-first, 1818, that he wrote the letter to Dilke which I gave as the first witness to my argument? In *Poems II*,[1] Woodhouse refers to some lines of Ronsard in connection with a certain passage in *Hyperion*,[2] so that Ronsard's connection with the subject is not a mere figment of my fancy. It is obvious that his reading of the *Vision* was subsequent to his writing to Reynolds, or he would certainly have asked Reynolds to look over that poem and mark it also. We know that he wrote to Reynolds before he wrote to Woodhouse since he tells Woodhouse so. That Keats did some work on the *Vision* during the late Autumn seems undoubted. Brown can hardly have been entirely mistaken on that score, but it must have been largely revision, for the fragment ends with the sixty-third line of the Second Canto. That he did revise the poem is evident from the fact that the lines here given from Canto I are not exactly like the corresponding lines in the version published by Lord Houghton.[3] It is perhaps suggestive of their immediate origin that the lines from Canto II do not differ at all from those printed, although I admit that this is equally true of the induction. What prevented the completion of the *Vision* was just what prevented the completion of the *Eve of St. Mark* — lack of vital energy.

After the publication of this "lost" letter in the *Memorial Volume*, both Sir Sidney Colvin and Professor de

[1] Crewe Collection.

[2] Quoted in the Addenda to the Notes of Professor de Sélincourt's *The Poems of John Keats*. Fourth Edition.

[3] *Bibliographical and Historical Miscellanies* of the Philobiblon Society. (1856–1857) Vol. III.

Sélincourt went on record[1] as believing the *Vision* to have been entirely written at Winchester. This I emphatically do not believe. If Keats had started a new version of his poem in Winchester, any considerable part of a new version, he would without doubt have mentioned the fact to George to whom he had been speaking of the progress of the poem from time to time. He did not mention the ode *To Autumn*, but that he considered a short poem which he could copy later, while anything so important as a fresh start on his epic would hardly have been accidentally omitted or casually ignored. That Brown thought the *Vision* to be a new thing in the Autumn, merely means that Keats had not told him of the earlier version begun at Well Walk. I do not think that he wrote all that we have of the Second Canto at Winchester, I believe he only began it. As to his evening work in the Autumn, it seems to me quite probable that he worked a little at both versions. Whatever he did, it was very little.

It is extremely difficult, not to say impossible, to deal at all adequately with *Hyperion*, not knowing just how much of the *Vision* was written at Well Walk and how much was done in the Autumn of 1819. The only approach to a definite fact which we have, is that *Hyperion* itself appears to have all been written during the Winter of 1818–19 at Wentworth Place. The more we come to examine it, the clearer it seems, that *Hyperion* was the direct result of the scathing criticisms in *Blackwood's* and the *Quarterly*, but in a way just the reverse of the old accepted view. Keats's original idea, as we see by the *Vision*, was to show a poet questioning himself, his vocation, demanding of the past where he and his kind stand in the scheme of things. Of what value are he and his work? It is really much the same idea which he had speculated on to Bailey in his letter from Burford Bridge the Autumn before, and again, under a somewhat changed aspect, to Taylor from Shanklin. The

[1] Letters to the *Manchester Guardian*. September 22, 1922.

poet can attain to the possibility of great poetry only by scaling the height of the ideal, the far-rising shrine of his personal, dedicated life. He must lose much to gain more, parts of his ego must perish that sublimer parts may rule. This last idea is given in the form of a symbolical dream, in which the older gods are dethroned and overcome by their more human and beautiful counterparts, the hierarchy of Grecian mythology. All this comes precious near to being allegory, but luckily never quite gets there. It does not get there because Keats was working with two entirely separate themes; one, the question of the poet's value to humanity; the other, a mythological narrative, full of grandeur certainly, but vague in outline, and although capable of many implications, explicit in none. The *Vision* was begun fairly in the teeth of the reviews, that must be fully understood; it was not abandoned until some months later. But why was it abandoned at all? That is the important question.

I think that when Keats, in December, at Wentworth Place, went back to the poem, he was suddenly struck with the fact that his beginning opened itself to some of the same strictures which had been made on *Endymion*. This, he felt, must not be, his next epic should in no way fall foul of any of the objections which had been made to the earlier poem. There should be nothing pretty in this new effort, all should be large, stern, of a sweeping and majestic utterance. He would show the world that "good Johnny Keats" was capable of the grand style if ever poet was, and promptly started to remodel his poem and write it as a drama only, a gigantic, impersonal drama, symbolical for those who searched for symbols, a surging, fulminating tale to those who did not.

Keats's sheer cleverness is to be seen in no other poem to anything like the extent it is in *Hyperion*. That he could write it, is a marvel. For a poet to write such excellent poetry as so much of *Hyperion* is, in a purely adopted style,

is a tour de force of the first order. *Hyperion* is a failure, not because it is not good, but because it is not honest. Keats is not speaking with his own voice, this sedate and stately pattern is none of his, there is no settled conviction here. This is merely a tracing from a pattern of an older age, and tracings are not genuine art no matter how deftly they are done.

Precisely why Keats has had so immense an effect upon succeeding generations is that he represents an original inspiration. He gave a new direction to poetry, and this direction, chiefly through his disciple Tennyson, has until very recently dominated English verse. Even now, when the many feeble imitations of his manner have brought about a temporary lull in the popularity of his idiom, a modern student can find much of the most evident of present-day trends in his poems. It is the simplicity of his verse, the perfectly straightforward diction of much of it, the vividness of this diction, the directness of his attack, the fearlessness of his innovations, for which we value him most in this early twentieth century.

What Keats tried to do in *Hyperion*, Milton did better; what he tried to do in the odes, in *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, in the *Eve of St. Agnes* and the *Eve of St. Mark*, diverse as these poems are to one another, no one has ever approached. He gave up *Hyperion* because he could not make it fit with his growing interests, and when, at Winchester, he examined it again, he was instantly conscious that this was no work for him. In saying to George: "I wish to devote myself to another verse alone," he is telling us all we need to know.

But why, my readers may ask, did Keats put no such definite ban on the evidently inferior *Vision*? The answer is that at least the *Vision* was an autochthonous utterance. This was the poem he had himself conceived and partly composed. Seeing it so, he felt it might not be impossible to resurrect and revise it, saving some of the

best parts of *Hyperion* by its means, but shearing them of the tang of archaism. As an illustration of what I mean, take the line of *Hyperion*:

"Came slope upon the threshold of the West."

This, in the *Vision*, is altered to the far simpler and less tortured:

"Is sloping to the threshold of the West."

Keats read, and liked, his description of the Temple of Saturn. Much excellent work accomplished in the past year had emboldened him to snap his fingers at the reviews. They could no longer worry him even to the extent of making him wish to write in a way which would be unassailable. He would write as he pleased and what he pleased. If he wrote the story of Hyperion at all, it should be done as his imagination dictated. The man who was to be the great precursor of modern poetry was beginning to know himself a little, and this knowledge taught him that erudite copies are no part of the equipment of a major poet.

There is much that might be said of both *Hyperion* and the *Vision*, but this is not the place for a comparative study of the two poems; space forbids, and we must return to the Woodhouse letter before the thread of it is quite lost.

Keats's criticism of himself is very interesting, and so is his comparison of the *Pot of Basil*, *Lamia* and the *Eve of St. Agnes*. I think no better description of the *Pot of Basil* has ever been made than his: "'A weak-sided Poem' with an amusing sober-sadness about it."

One point which he touches whimsically upon in his letter had in reality no whimsicality about it. He had not received any answers to the letters he had written Brown. His suspicious nature took serious alarm, which he expresses humorously enough, but which was nevertheless only half a joke. What on earth was the matter? Why did not

Brown answer? Brown was in Ireland, consummating his illegal marriage, but Keats was ignorant of that. He was particularly anxious to hear from Brown, as he wanted his opinion and agreement to the plan he mentions to Woodhouse, that of living in Westminster and doing hack-work for the magazines.

It was a plan which he had been gradually fixing upon ever since his return to Winchester, and the special why of it sprang from a fantastic sense of responsibility in regard to George. Here is Keats, hopelessly out of pocket, deeply in debt, definitely engaged to be married, and yet he feels it incumbent on him to say to his brother:

> "If I cannot remit you hundreds, I will tens, and if not that, ones . . . To this end I will devote whatever I may gain for a few years to come, at which period I must begin to think of a security for my own comfort, when quiet will become more pleasant to me than the world."

And, lest George should imagine that this entails a sacrifice, he adds:

> "In all this do never think of me as in any way unhappy: I shall not be so. I have a great pleasure in thinking of my responsibility to you, and shall do myself the greatest luxury if I can succeed in any way so as to be of assistance to you."

Under the circumstances, this attitude was bizarre, to say the least; and he seems not to have been quite candid in his explanation of the matter to Fanny Brawne, or she misunderstood the facts. But we shall come to this later.

So full was Keats of his plan, that, on this same Wednesday, he wrote again to Brown and also to Dilke. To the latter, he made a request. Would Dilke look up a lodging for him; he is determined to do "anything but Mortgage my Brain to Blackwood," and he is going to start immediately, for, he says with vigorous emphasis:

> "Wait for the issue of this Tragedy? No — there cannot be greater uncertainties east, west, north, and south than concerning dramatic composition. How many months must I wait! Had I not better look about me now? . . . I have no trust whatever on Poetry. I don't wonder at it — the marvel is to me how people read so much of it."

To Brown, Keats is positively wistful, detailing his reasons for his decision and begging his friend to approve of his plan. He goes into the facts, and his attitude toward them, much more fully than he does to Woodhouse or Dilke:

> "It is quite time I should set myself doing something, and live no longer upon hopes. I have never yet exerted myself. I am getting into an idle-minded, vicious way of life, almost content to live upon others. In no period of my life have I acted with any self-will but in throwing up the apothecary prefession. That I do not repent of . . . I have not known yet what it is to be diligent. I purpose living in town in a cheap lodging, and endeavouring, for a beginning, to get the theatricals of some paper . . . Look on my side of the question. I am convinced I am right . . . And here I will take an opportunity of making a remark or two on our friendship, and on all your good offices to me. I have a natural timidity of mind in these matters; liking better to take the feeling between us for granted, than to speak of it. But, good God! what a short while you have known me! . . . You have been living for others more than any man I know . . . I had got into a habit of mind of looking towards you as a help in all difficulties. This very habit would be the parent of idleness and difficulties. You will see it as a duty I owe myself to break the neck of it. I do nothing for my subsistance — make no exertion. At the end of another year you shall applaud me, not for verses, but for conduct."

By Thursday, September twenty-third, Brown had returned from Ireland and gone to old Mr. Dilke's at Chichetser, where he received four letters from Keats "all in a

lump." He explained his silence by the prevarication that he had left Bedhampton for Chichester while Keats was still directing to the former place.

Brown told Lord Houghton that the tone of Keats's letters brought him at once to Winchester, but his coming was not so immediate as to preclude his sending his uncandid explanation of the reason of his silence to Keats by letter. When he did come, however, he felt constrained to agree that Keats was wise in his decision to try and find some remunerative work, but he strenuously opposed the Westminster part of the scheme, alleging how much he should miss Keats from Wentworth Place. What arguments Keats used to persuade him, whether he hinted at the disturbing proximity of Fanny Brawne or not, we do not know. The part of his letter which seems to contain this information was carefully expunged by Brown before giving the letter to Lord Houghton. That he was brought round to Keats's way of thinking in the end, is evident from another letter to Dilke, written on Friday, October first. Here Keats says specifically: "I want you to hire me a couple of rooms (a Sitting Room and bed room for myself alone) in Westminster." Toward the end of the letter, he assures Dilke that he and Brown will "be returned by next Friday." On Sunday, he was so generous as to write to Haydon in answer to a letter from that gentleman accusing him of silence. Keats does not mention a syllable of Haydon's defection in not repaying the loan, but says nice things about his pictures, and asks him to try and procure a ticket to the British Museum, which, Keats assures him, he shall make better use of than he did "in the first instance." To Haydon, he says that he shall not be in Winchester "more than a Week more," but I think the date given to Dilke is probably the correct one to ascribe to his return. At any rate, on some day between the first and the tenth of October, Keats and Brown turned their backs on Winchester and hied them to London,

Brown to Hampstead, Keats to 25 College Street, Westminster, where Dilke had found him rooms according to specifications. Keats was in high spirits, his sore throat had temporarily gone, and he felt himself strong and girded for a great undertaking. A greater than he knew, poor fellow! With the closing of the Winchester chapter, life as he had known it hitherto came to an abrupt end.

CHAPTER XII

ILLNESS

THE probabilities are in favour of its having been on Friday, October eighth, that Keats took possession of his College Street lodgings, and there is every likelihood that it was on the very next day, Saturday, that Severn dropped in to see him and welcome him back to town. Severn has recorded that, on this occasion, he found Keats in high spirits, full of energy and animation. Keats read *Hyperion* to him (evidently the Wentworth Place version, not the *Vision*), and he appears to have read it chiefly for the purpose of getting Severn's reaction to its style. Severn, who was an ardent Miltonian, "delighted immeasurably in 'Hyperion,'"[1] but said that Keats "seemed much more taken up with a rhymed story about a serpent-girl," which was, of course, *Lamia*. Severn praised *Hyperion* for its Miltonic flavour, which only served to confirm Keats in his opinion that he had been on the wrong tack in writing it. He told Severn succinctly that he did not want to write a poem "that might have been written by John Milton, but one that was unmistakably written by no other than John Keats."

On Sunday, Keats did the most natural thing in the world, he went out to Hampstead, and he and Fanny Brawne met once more. The meeting was decisive. The sorely tried girl was overjoyed to see her lover again, and was kindness itself to him. Even Keats could have no doubt of her love and constancy after the greeting she accorded him, and the very sight of her was enough to banish all his morbid intentions of weaning himself away from her. He simply fell head over heels in love with her again, or, to be more exact, his feeling for her, which he had been at such pains to smother with a host of other claims and im-

[1] *Life of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp.

portunities, rose swiftly to the surface once more, scattering every other interest to the four winds. To Keats, starved, lonely, troubled, the day was nothing short of divine. He came back to the empty lodgings at College Street in the evening and at once wrote a sonnet. This sonnet can have been no other than *The day is gone, and all its sweets are gone*, since it corresponds exactly to the sentiments he expressed in a note to Miss Brawne written the next day, Monday. Lord Houghton, in printing it, gave the date as "1819," and there cannot be the faintest doubt that its complete date is October tenth, 1819. Here is the sonnet:

"The day is gone, and all its sweets are gone!
Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and softer breast,
Warm breath, light whisper, tender semi-tone,
Bright eyes, accomplish'd shape, and lang'rous waist!
Faded the flower and all its budded charms,
Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,
Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,
Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness, paradise —
Vanish'd unseasonably at shut of eve,
When the dusk holiday — or holinight
Of fragrant-curtain'd love begins to weave
The woof of darkness thick, for hid delight;
But, as I've read love's missal through to-day,
He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray."

Not among Keats's best sonnets — no, but certainly among the most pathetic that have ever been written. For a man of Keats's temperament to have gone off alone after such a day, was a terrible strain; and the quiet and noble way in which he faced his destiny was magnificent. His letter tells the same story, but in a somewhat more tempered form:

"My sweet Girl,

I am living today in yesterday: I was in a complete fascination all day. I feel myself at your mercy. Write me

ever so few lines and tell me you will never for ever be less kind to me than yesterday. — You dazzled me. There is nothing in the world so bright and delicate . . . When shall we pass a day alone? I have had a thousand kisses, for which with my whole soul I thank love — but if you should deny me the thousand and first — 'twould put me to the proof how great a misery I could live through . . . I have seen Mrs. Dilke this morning; she says she will come with me any fine day.

Ever yours
JOHN KEATS.

Ah hertè mine!"

There is no mention of the sonnet in this letter, which looks as though Keats did not send it to Miss Brawne. It said so much, too much for him to say to her, he may very well have thought. This was the early nineteenth century, remember; and Fanny Brawne was only just nineteen and a carefully nurtured girl of the straight-laced middle class. How scrupulously Keats guarded her innocence is evident in all his letters to her. Once only did he commit an indiscretion, and that was when illness had sapped both his judgment and his will.

Fanny Brawne immediately sent him the assurance he craved; it came two days later, while he was writing to her again. I do not propose to give any more of Keats's letters to Miss Brawne during this period than are absolutely necessary to a clear understanding of his situation, mental and physical. They can be read in full in Buxton Forman's editions. Certain extracts, however, I must give, and give with some completeness. This is a part of what he wrote on Wednesday, October thirteenth:

"MY DEAREST GIRL,

This moment I have set myself to copy some verses out fair. I cannot proceed with any degree of content. I must write you a line or two and see if that will assist in dismissing you from my Mind for ever so short a time. Upon my Soul I can think of nothing else. The time is passed when I

had power to advise and warn you against the unpromising morning of my Life. My love has made me selfish. I cannot exist without you. I am forgetful of everything but seeing you again — my Life seems to stop there — I see no further. You have absorb'd me. I have a sensation at the present moment as though I was dissolving — I should be exquisitely miserable without the hope of soon seeing you. I should be afraid to separate myself far from you. My sweet Fanny, will your heart never change? My love, will it? I have no limit now to my love . . . Your note came in just here. I cannot be happier away from you. 'Tis richer than an Argosy of Pearles . . . You have ravish'd me away by a Power I cannot resist; and yet I could resist till I saw you; and even since I have seen you I have endeavoured often 'to reason against the reasons of my Love.' I can do so no more — the pain would be too great. My love is selfish. I cannot breathe without you.

Yours for ever
JOHN KEATS."

Keats, as I have tried to show in the last chapter, was in no state to bear undue excitement of any kind. His dread of the fever of composition was forcing itself upon his consciousness, and if the composition of poetry were a strain, what must the agitation of thwarted love have been. Yet, even thwarted, love had its comforts, and these he craved with his whole soul. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that no one living in such a mental turmoil was in a fit condition to tramp up and down the pavement of Grub Street seeking employment. All he could do, poor moth, was to flutter back to the proximity of his candle. On Friday, he journeyed to Hampstead again, and this time he made a stay of three days with Brown. Why Buxton Forman and Sir Sidney Colvin persist in believing that he stayed with the Brawnes, I cannot imagine, unless they derive their opinion from some source which I have not consulted. On Saturday, October sixteenth, he wrote to his sister. He dates the letter simply "Wentworth Place," but in it he says:

"I took lodgings in Westminster for the purpose of being in the reach of Books, but am now returned to Hampstead being induced to it by the habit I have acquired in this room I am now in and also from the pleasure of being free from paying any petty attentions to a diminutive housekeeping."

He had acquired no habit of being in any room at the Brawnes'. It is his old room at Brown's to which he refers. The reasons given to his sister were not his real reasons, however much he may have tried to induce himself to believe in their importance; but they were very likely the reasons he adduced to Brown, who was only too glad to get him back on any terms. He does not seem to have told Fanny Brawne of his change of plan while he was at Hampstead, yet he appears to have contemplated it before going out. He even seems to have paid off his College Street landlady after a week under her roof, for, when he went back to town, he put up with the Dilkes in Great Smith Street; at least, it was from there that he wrote to Fanny Brawne on Tuesday morning. In this letter, we see Keats determined upon his course, but rather miserably aware of what that course entailed:

"My sweet Fanny,

On awaking from my three days dream ('I cry to dream again') I find one and another astonish'd at my idleness and thoughtlessness. I was miserable last night — the morning is always restorative. I must be busy, or try to be so. I have several things to speak to you of tomorrow morning. Mrs. Dilke I should think will tell you that I purpose living at Hampstead. I must impose chains upon myself. I shall be able to do nothing. I should like to cast the die for Love or death. I have no Patience with anything else . . . my mind is in a tremble, I cannot tell what I am writing.

Ever my love yours
John Keats."

The tenor of this letter means that Keats was profoundly disappointed with himself. He believed that he was spinelessly allowing himself to follow the line of least resistance, that he was permitting the immediate necessity he felt to be near Miss Brawne to unnerve him from doing the only thing which could bring them permanently together. He saw himself playing the sentimental fool instead of getting up and going about his work like a sensible fellow. He saw his grandiloquent purpose of being self-supporting vanish from him like an ever more distantly floating soap-bubble, while all he did was to stand agape, enraptured by its iridescent colours. But here Keats did himself a gross injustice. It was not Fanny Brawne, it was not even love, which kept him inert during these days. It was his health. He did not march boldly into the offices of one or another newspaper and request a job at reviewing a play, or set his pen to scratching over paper at something which was, if nothing else, at any rate saleable. Little fitted as he was for tasks like these, he might at least have made a try at them. It was his health which kept him quiescent. He simply could not do what he had planned; he had not the strength. He had exhausted himself with his Summer's work. The poetic urge which had kept him up through the Winchester days might have held out a little longer if he had not so soon touched the fire of renewed sexual passion, I freely admit that. But he had touched it, and under the circumstances probably the wisest course for him to pursue was the one he took. His waning energy could not have been triumphant for very long, in any case, and we may be very sure that it could never have survived any attempt at work which was not poetry.

It is quite natural that his friends, who understood nothing, neither the force of his love, nor the devastating effect of his disease, who did not, indeed, realize the presence of disease at all, should have been "astonish'd" at finding all his vigorous talk spend itself in melancholy brooding. It

was they, and their astonishment, which did him harm. His only hope lay in peace and idleness, and they urged him to fresh endeavour. It was this terrible, goading astonishment which heralded his first hæmorrhage.

Keats's illness was dual in kind. He had pulmonary tuberculosis and laryngeal tuberculosis. The former had not yet shown itself by any symptoms which Keats had detected; the latter had been in evidence for two years, but the doctors whom Keats had consulted had failed to recognize it. If my readers will turn back to Chapter VI, and read once more Dr. Hawes's[1] letter on the subject, they will understand the situation perfectly and realize how very long it was since Keats had been a well man. Accredited apothecary and surgeon though he was, he failed to read his own symptoms correctly, and scourged himself for his want of moral purpose when he might more justly have plumed himself on having kept at work so long. To add the last straw to his general debility, he suddenly gave up eating animal food, in order, he tells his sister Fanny, "that my brains may never henceforth be in a greater mist than is theirs by nature." No more mistaken course could have been adopted, nor one more speedily calculated to bring his fate upon him.

Keats probably returned to Hampstead at once. His going back to Westminster at all was undoubtedly for some practical reason like seeing Abbey, or getting his luggage, what there was of it, which he may have deposited at the Dilkes' on giving up his lodgings.

We have no more letters from Keats for a month, but certain side winds have blown us a little information concerning the interval. One of these emanates from Severn, who gets his dates wrong, since he appears to be referring to the Sunday a week after his call at College Street, which cannot possibly be the case. On the other hand, it is extremely likely that the Sunday he speaks of was the first

[1] See Vol. I, p. 514.

after Keats's definite return to Wentworth Place. Severn, on the Sunday in question, went out to Hampstead to see Keats again, on which occasion he found him "well neither in mind nor in body, with little of the happy confidence and resolute bearing of a week earlier; while alternating moods of apathetic dejection and spasmodic gaiety rendered him a companion somewhat difficult to humour."[1]

However violent Keats's struggle with himself may have been, however tantalizing and over-exciting he may have found his constant intercourse with Fanny Brawne, we cannot but see that, of a choice of evils, living close to her at Brown's was the lesser, for he began to write almost as soon as he was settled in his old quarters. *Otho* was still being copied by the indefatigable Brown, and the friends had every hope of placing it at Drury Lane as soon as it was ready to submit to the powers who ruled the destinies of that theatre. So strong were their hopes of it, that it seemed to the two young men that Keats could not do better than to start on another play at once. Brown told the story of Keats's second attempt at drama writing to Lord Houghton in these words:

> [2] "As soon as Keats had finished 'Otho the Great,' I pointed out to him a subject for an English historical tragedy in the reign of Stephen, beginning with his defeat by the Empress Maud and ending with the death of his son Eustace. He was struck with the variety of events and characters which must necessarily be introduced, and I offered to give, as before, their dramatic conduct. 'The play must open,' I began, 'with the field of battle, when Stephen's forces are retreating' — 'Stop,' he cried, 'I have been too long in leading strings; I will do all this myself.' He immediately set about it, and wrote two or three scenes."

Sir Sidney Colvin thinks that Brown's suggestion was

[1] *Life of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp.
[2] Quoted by Buxton Forman. Complete Edition.

made, and the "two or three scenes" (actually four) written, in Winchester, but that he is in error here seems evident from the fact that the manuscript, of which five folio leaves are in Keats's handwriting and three quarto leaves in Brown's,[1] is carefully dated by Brown "Nov. 1819." Moreover there is in existence a copy of Selden's *Titles of Honour*,[2] purchased by Keats in 1819, clearly in order to have constantly by him a reference book as to the usages, civil and military, of the period. Surely, if Keats had been at such pains to inform himself on the subject in Winchester, some of his letters from there, full of his work as they are, would have mentioned it, and none of them do. On the flyleaves of this volume, Keats started a methodical index to speed his labours, and that he intended to refer to it frequently we see by his having re-numbered various pages which are wrongly numbered in the text. Buxton Forman owned this book, but seems not to have understood its connection with the fragment of *King Stephen*. I owe my realization of it to my friend, Professor John Livingston Lowes, who made the important discovery one evening at my house when we were examining the book.

Keats's annotations, which are few, are all in Chapter V, which deals with the English titles of Lords, etc. These annotations, meagre as they are, are very interesting. For instance, it was probably as a guide for certain possible speeches that Keats marked: "for in those times the affectation of making words out of that little Greek they had was frequent here in England." We find him indexing "Atheling" and "Reliefs," under which latter heading we read this important pointer: "An Earl's Relief is eight Horse, four saddled and four unsaddled, four Helms, four Coats of Mail, four Spears, as many Shields, four Swords, CC [two hundred] Marks of Gold." Keats underscored a long passage descriptive of the word "Bel-

[1] Buxton Forman. [2] Author's Collection.

house," and he also annotated the suggestive words: "Deo & beato Æthelwoldo." As to matters directly bearing upon King Stephen, there is on page 536 a passage which reads: "Neither is this Charter against those that say King Stephen created him. The Civil Warrs of that time are well known. And this Lord being sometimes of the Queen's part, sometimes of King Stephen's, was created, it seems, by both as some others were." Here Keats has underlined: "was created, it seems, by both as some others were," and put a cross against it in the margin.[1]

It is not only in the scored passages that we find references which might have been valuable to Keats; but we must not expect, in the very short fragment which is all that Keats wrote of the play, to find these references in direct use. Keats apparently intended to employ the volume both as a dictionary and a creator of atmosphere. One direct allusion we do find, however; it derives from two unannotated passages which are to this effect — the first is in reference to King Stephen's crown: "King Stephen also in both [seal and coins], hath only a like Crown fleurie"; the second speaks of the titles, "Duke of Cornwal and Earl of Chester," as sometimes given with that of Prince of Wales. Now, in Scene I of *King Stephen*, Keats wrote:

> "Not twenty Earls of Chester shall browbeat
> The diadem."

In *King Stephen*, Keats was plainly imitating Shakespeare in his historical plays. Not intentionally, we may be sure, but because, in dealing with such a subject in such a form, his mind fell naturally into the attitude and cadences of the poet whose work in the *genre* he had studied with such care. Keats had managed to free himself from imitation in his poems, but drama was too new a vehicle for him to have tracked his own way in it as yet. Still *King Stephen*, in spite of its too slavish adherence to a model,

[1] For complete list of annotations, see Appendix C.

has much beauty, and the model itself was far more indigenous to Keats than Milton's *Paradise Lost* had been. The first three scenes are really extraordinarily good. In a half-a-dozen speeches, Keats establishes a distinct character for his Stephen; and the Duke of Glocester, although drawn with a slighter line, stamps himself as a man and not an effigy. The bustle and shock of battle is excellently given, and however one may regret the fact that Keats conceived his play as a thing of echoes, one must admit that the echoes are superlatively well done. Is not this good?

> "Now may we lift our bruised vizors up,
> And take the flattering freshness of the air,
> While the wide din of battle fades away
> Into times past."

Or this?

> ". . . He sole and lone maintains
> A hopeless bustle mid our swarming arms,
> And with a nimble savageness attacks."

Or this again:

> "He shames our victory. His valour still
> Keeps elbow-room amid our eager swords."

Yes, there is much excellence here; but, after all, Keats is writing to a pattern, even if the pattern would have perfectly suited him had he been his own great-great-grandfather. For, as has often been pointed out, Keats and Shakespeare are cousins german in their poetic points of view, however much the older poet surpassed the younger. It is a curious commentary on Keats's natural diction when in the heat of his story that the lines:

> "Another sword! And what if I could seize
> One from Bellona's gleaming armoury,"

were originally written:

> "Another Sword! for one short minute longer
> That I might pepper that De Kaims."

There is a marked falling off in the Fourth Scene, laid in Queen Maud's Presence Chamber. We feel that Keats approached it with a flagging interest; and with the scene the fragment ends.

We may urge our perspicacity to its utmost, and speculate among various even chances, as to just why Keats abandoned his play then and there. The reasons so evoked — inability to face the imaginative strain imposed by a long play, insufficiency of atmosphere in Selden to provoke his inventive faculty, a scene laid in a period too remote for intimacy, not remote enough for romance, a sudden change of mood, the realization that he was extremely ignorant of the technique of dramatic composition — are all cogent, but none of them seem decisive. Probably there was a little of all of them in his action. At any rate, the play remained a fragment.

With the breaking down of *King Stephen*, Brown found himself once more at a loss as to what to suggest which would interest his friend and at the same time have a bearing on the exchequer, and he could not help seeing that it must be something which Keats could do without too much mental strain and with no emotional exactions whatever. He himself delighted in fairy stories, and both he and Keats were possessed of keen senses of humour. Satire, humour, and fairies — what a piquant combination! Lord Byron had just swept the reading world off its feet with the audacities of *Don Juan*. Why should not Keats dash off a potboiler in the form of a joke, which would be a lark to write, and might — just might, mind you — tickle the public fancy, and put some convenient guineas into Keats's empty pockets? How much of this he told Keats, we do not know, probably not all. But he could not help seeing

that Keats's real work was not getting on, and he may very well have urged his scheme as a relief and antithesis. Of the circumstances of the genesis and composition of the *Cap and Bells*, Brown wrote:

> [1] "By chance our conversation turned on the idea of a comic faery poem in the Spenser stanza, and I was glad to encourage it. He had not composed many stanzas before he proceeded in it with spirit. It was to be published under the feigned authorship of *Lucy Vaughan Lloyd* and to bear the title of the *Cap and Bells*, or, which he preferred, *The Jealousies*. This occupied his mornings pleasantly. He wrote it with the greatest facility; in one instance I remember having copied (for I copied as he wrote) as many as twelve stanzas before dinner."

When Lord Houghton printed the poem in 1848, he appended to it a note by Brown which reads:

> "This Poem was written subject to future amendments and omissions: it was begun without a plan, and without any prescribed laws for the supernatural machinery."

Here was Keats, then, during the first weeks of November, spending his mornings with Brown in the sitting-room which opened on the garden, writing the *Cap and Bells* easily and with the utmost speed; and passing his evenings alone in his own study, forcing himself to the revision of the *Vision of Hyperion*, changing certain passages culled out of *Hyperion* with little dexterity, putting down a word, scratching it out, trying for lines, for a continuation which would not come, cudgelling his brains for a subject which should free him from his paralysing lassitude, eternally obsessed with the thought of his apparently hopeless future where marriage was concerned — doing all these things, but most of the time doing nothing but suffer —

[1] Quoted from *The Poems of John Keats*, edited by E. de Sélincourt. The passage also appears in Sir Sidney Colvin's short *Life of Keats*. English Men of Letters Series.

suffer — suffer — at the terrible inertia he could neither shake off nor rise above.

If Keats were at a stand in his serious work, the *Cap and Bells*, on the other hand, flowed with remarkable swiftness, and at first he seemed to get a great deal of amusement from it. There are eighty-eight stanzas in the fragment of the *Cap and Bells*, but at the rate at which Brown reports Keats as writing it, that would represent only a little over a week's work. But the *Cap and Bells* was as powerless to chain his wandering attention as *King Stephen* had been. He did not definitely abandon it, even so late as the following August he seems to have had hopes of going on with it; but, the first rush of enthusiasm over, he began to weary and question, and wonder whether he had not better fish round for another large subject which would stimulate his serious imagination. On Wednesday, November seventeenth, he wrote to Taylor of a new theme which he thought might do. He says:

> "I have come to a determination not to publish anything I have now ready written; but for all that to publish a Poem before long and that I hope to make a fine one. As the marvellous is the most enticing and the surest guarantee of harmonious numbers I have been endeavouring to persuade myself to untether Fancy and to let her manage for herself. I and myself cannot agree about this at all. Wonders are no wonders to me. I am more at home amongst Men and women. I would rather read Chaucer than Ariosto. The little dramatic skill I may as yet have however badly it might show in a Drama would I think be sufficient for a Poem. I wish to diffuse the colouring of St. Agnes eve throughout a poem in which Character and Sentiment would be the figures to such drapery. Two or three such Poems, if God should spare me, written in the course of the next six years, would be a famous gradus ad Parnassum altissimum. I mean they would nerve me up to the writing of a few fine Plays — my greatest ambition — when I do feel ambitious. I am sorry to say that is very seldom. The subject we have once or twice talked of ap-

pears a promising one, the Earl of Leicester's history. I am this morning reading Holingshed's Elizabeth. You had some Books awhile ago, you promised to lend me, illustrative of my subject. If you can lay hold of them or any others which may be serviceable to me I know you will encourage my low-spirited muse by sending them — or rather by letting me know when our Errand cart Man shall call with my little Box. I will endeavour to set my self selfishly at work on this Poem that is to be."

But he could not set himself to work on any such large undertaking. He was undoubtedly right in thinking his dramatic skill insufficient for a play, and wisely critical in believing that a dramatic poem might be within his compass, and yet, when one considers along what line, or lines, Keats's creative faculty most naturally and happily moved, one is inclined to doubt even that. One cannot but fail to see that the tether of history would have been a severe handicap to an imagination such as his. It is no matter either way, for Keats did nothing with the Earl of Leicester's history. No least scrap of any such poem has ever come to light. Keats had no longer the vitality to do more than work over poems already written, or possibly, from time to time, add a stanza or two to the *Cap and Bells*.

Keats lovers hitherto have been of one mind in their condemnation of the *Cap and Bells*. To Rossetti, it was "the to me hateful Cap and Bells."[1] Buxton Forman considered it "entirely unworthy of Keats" and "a mere intellectual and mechanical exercise." Sir Sidney Colvin thinks that for Keats such a subject was "essentially against the grain," and Professor de Sélincourt points out "how unsuitable the subject and treatment are to the essential character of his own genius." But are they? It seems to me that these devoted gentlemen are all determined to ignore one side of their idol. Immensely delighting in Keats's

[1] Buxton Forman. Complete Edition.

lyric gift, they turn their eyes resolutely away from that other part of him which revelled in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, enjoyed the broad satire of *Guzman d'Alfarache*, and copied Brown's decidedly coarse tales at great length in his letters to George and Rice. Satire is seldom an attribute of youth, and that Keats was only on the threshold of this corner of his poetic domain, is true. But that he would have penetrated farther in this direction had he lived, it is impossible to doubt. Even Sir Sidney Colvin, on the last page of his *Life of Keats*, suggests this important query — his paragraph in full reads:

> "Again, along with his admirable capacity for loyal devotion and sympathy in friendship, we find in him capacities of quite another kind, capacities for disillusionment and for seeing through and chafing at human and social shams and pretensions and absurdities; and we ask ourselves, would this strain in him, which we find expressed with a degree of pettish and premature cynicism, for instance in the *Cap and Bells* and in some of his later letters, have matured in time into a power either of virile satire or genial reconciling comedy?"

Against the chorus of disapproval which his immediate descendants have fairly shouted over the *Cap and Bells*, it is strange to find a sympathetic word accorded to the poem from his contemporary, Lord Jeffrey, who, in a letter to Lord Houghton, after the publication of the latter's collected edition in 1848, wrote of the "strange outbursts of individual fancy and felicitous expressions in the 'Cap and Bells' though the general extravagance of the poetry is more suited to an Italian than to an English taste."[1]

Recent criticism has turned more favourable eyes on the *Cap and Bells*. We now see the poem as another of Keats's many experiments, and a very interesting one; and we recognize in it not only the rudiments of political and social

[1] Quoted by Buxton Forman. Complete Edition.

satire, but an arrow pointing to Keats's multifarious reading along many lines, some of which we knew of, but some of which may very possibly have been overlooked.

Keats undoubtedly took the main incident of his tale from the fairy episode in the *Midsummer Night's Dream.* Sir Sidney Colvin couples this with Southey's translation of Wieland's *Oberon,* which is very likely true, although we have no knowledge of Keats's having read that work. Besides these two sources, there was another ready to Keats's hand in the current gossip of the day, and the newspapers, both daily and weekly. England was just at this time buzzing with the quarrel between the Prince Regent and his wife, the unfortunate, and self-banished, Princess of Wales, in a few months to be the returned, but uncrowned, Queen Caroline.

Had one unlimited space and all the time in the world at one's disposal, it would be amusing to trace Keats's various indebtednesses throughout the *Cap and Bells,* which has never been thoroughly done. As it is, we can merely glance at a few examples. Keats took the Spenserian stanza precisely because of its unsuitability for comic verse. This audacious act has called down upon him a whole hurricane of sighs from generations of shocked classicists; yet that he managed his intractable medium with much skill, cannot be denied by any one who has read the poem with an unprejudiced mind. But his stanza was not the only thing which Keats got from Spenser; he filched his fairy king directly from the Tenth Book of the Second Canto of the *Faery Queene,* where Spenser gives a genealogy of the fairy sovereigns, one of whom is "noble Elfinan." From Spenser too, Keats received the idea of placing his fairy realm in India, and calling its capital city Panthea. But Keats's Panthea hovers in the air, which Spenser's does not; for this attribute of the fairy Emperor's capital, Keats went to Drayton,[1] who, in the *Nymphidea* tells of

[1] *Shakespeare and Keats,* by Claude L. Finney.

the palace of "that proud Fairy King, Oberon," which, he says

> "... standeth in the air,
> By necromancy placed there,
> That it no tempests needs to fear
> Which way soe'er it blow it.

When we come to the publisher Parpaglion and the alchemist and soothsayer Hum, we find Keats borrowing from various of Ben Jonson's plays. Not only is the curious name Hum found in the *Alchemist*, where it is used as a cabalistic word by Subtle in an injunction to Dapper:

> "... cry hum
> Thrise,"

but Keats seems to have taken his "Scarab Street" from the same source, for Subtle calls Face "Scarabe," as a term of opprobrium. Miss Yvonne Dusser, who wrote a most interesting letter to the *Times Literary Supplement*, some years ago, from which I have taken this detail, quotes from Greene's *Planetomachia* the following pertinent sentence: "the baze minds of such as with the Scarab Flye, delighteth only to live in dung and mire," to which Miss Dusser adds: "Scarab Street thus seems a fit dwelling place for the publisher Parpaglion, a scandal-monger." Miss Dusser also notes that Ben Jonson "uses the word 'hum' to satirize the talk of the puritans," and, considering that Keats's Hum aids and abets the Fairy Elfinan in his illicit love affair with a mortal, the derivation seems obvious.

It is also likely that Keats invented Crafticant's name with Jonson's Dame Purecraft from *Bartholomew Fair* in mind, and much of the alchemistical lore hinted at when the page, Eban, goes to Hum's house, points to the *Alchemist* and very probably also to Chaucer in the *Chanones Yemannes Tale*. Besides these sources, there is a chance

that Keats had happened across some old volumes of alchemy and astrology. For references to the latter science, he had not only the poets, but *Moore's Almanack*, which is mentioned in the poem.

Being somewhat interested in the possible sources of Keats's alchemical terms, apart from their literary derivations, I asked my friend Mr. S. Foster Damon,[1] who has made a study of these things, to note them for me. His answer to my request gave the following:

> "Hum, one presumes, is an alchemist on account of his 'furnace-scorched brow' (Stanza LVII); but what alchemical terms he uses are more easily explained otherwise, and are so generally in use that it would be impossible to trace them to any definite source.
>
> *Aqua vitæ* (Stanza XXXIII) is a common alchemical term, meaning (1) the First Matter or (2) the Medicine prepared from the First Matter; but from the 16th century on it had been commonly applied to any form of ardent spirits prepared for drink.
>
> *Nitre* (Stanza XXXIII) is another word for salt-peter, common in alchemy, equally common in medicine.
>
> *Venus* (Stanza XXXIV) means copper in alchemy, but is here used astrologically.
>
> *Mercury* (Stanza LXIX) means quick-silver in alchemy, but is here used astrologically as the Protecting Influence over Thieves (this idea goes back to Greek mythology).
>
> These are all the terms which could possibly be interpreted alchemically; but Keats probably used them quite otherwise.
>
> There are several other astrological terms: "cast a quiet figure" (Stanza XXXII) means to draw up a (quiet) horoscope. The *chalk* (Stanza XXXIII) was for this purpose. *Stars and Zodiac* (Stanza XXXIII) are astrological. Other occult terms are gathered haphazard.
>
> *Zendervester* is the Zend Avesta (Stanza II).
>
> *Grains of Paradise* (Stanza XXXIII) were cardamon seeds, used in medicine as spice — mentioned by Chaucer and everyone after him.

[1] Author of *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols*. 1924.

Don't tell me what you want (Stanza XXXVI) — a common trick of ancient magicians and modern seers. Vulgarly considered a test of supernatural powers when they can tell themselves. See in the Bible, the second chapter of the Book of Daniel, where Nebuchadnezzar planned to execute all the seers because they could not tell him the dream he had forgotten.

I do not know what coming down stairs backwards in one shoe means (Stanza XXXIV) — it sounds like a charlatan's trick. (Note reference to Mother Goose: 'Diddle-diddle dumpling'.)"

Yes, Keats went merrily to Mother Goose; and to hints of folk medical practices, in his "*dentes sapientiæ* of mice." Another interesting letter to the *Times*[1] goes at length into the prevalence of the use of mice as medical ingredients. The author, Mr. Donald A. Mackenzie,[2] says very pertinently: "It may be that the poet heard something, during his wanderings, about the Highland mouse cures . . . He may have heard that the teeth of mice were worn as charms . . . As mouse cures were as prevalent in England as in Scotland, it is possible, of course, that Keats may have heard of them from some rural patient in a London Hospital." Various parts of mice were used in these cures; but the importance of that rodent's "wisdom teeth" seems to have been Keats's own happy invention.

For the political references in the *Cap and Bells*, Buxton Forman gives a few illustrations. He identifies the "square-cut chancellor" with Mr. Vansittart, and the "tiptoe marquis" with the Marquis of Lansdowne; but the most amusing of his discoveries is that which refers to "Esquire Biancopany." Keats's wit was delightfully employed in inventing his name, for Buxton Forman splits it into "Bianco — white, pane — bread," and proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that he is Mr. Whitbread, a violent rad-

[1] *Times Literary Supplement*, February 14, 1918.
[2] Author of *Myths of Crete and Pre-Hellenic Europe*.

ical, and an ardent adherent of the maligned Princess of Wales.

The *Cap and Bells* is not so sparkling a skit as it ought to have been, and would have been had Keats been his normal self when he wrote it. Still, it is far from dull reading; the night flight, recorded in Crafticant's diary, is extremely ingenious, while the description of the black slave, Eban, admiring himself and his gorgeous clothes reflected in the "pearl-pav'd street" is quite irresistible. Keats is even witty at his own expense. The poet who can make fun of his own work is a very great poet indeed, and one blessed with an infinite sense of humour. Such a poet also knows that his serious work is unassailable. It implies no doubt of his *Eve of St. Mark* that he here treats it to a little gentle fooling by making Elfinan in love with a certain Bertha Pearl who lives in Canterbury. Among other sly digs at his real poem, Hum gives the Emperor a "legend-laden" book to take to Bertha, the sight of which is guaranteed to send her into a fainting fit at once.

Viewed with unbiased eyes, the *Cap and Bells* is often clever and occasionally brilliant; but the most remarkable thing about it is that Keats, suffering and miserable as he was, could have written it at all, could have written anything in such a vein, and yet it was just this vein which kept him going. It turned his mind to merry things and kept it there during the hours of composition. But the time came, and, as we have seen, in a very few days, when he could no longer make the effort to free himself from himself. Every unproductive day showed him more plainly the coil which was weaving round him. He could not hope to marry without money, he could not get money unless he worked, and he could not work. I think, too, there is ample evidence to prove that Keats was beginning to fear that he was the victim of disease. His mother and Tom had both died of tuberculosis, and it would have been strange if the thought that he too might go the same way

had not entered his head. But I do not think that at this time it had. I believe rather that he was not sure what he had. The doctors, when he consulted them about his throat as he was frequently forced to do, made no such suggestion, and he could hardly, with his inexperience of actual practice, believe them totally wrong. Yet the thought of death hung constantly over him. A man in health does not say to his publisher that he will do thus and thus, if God should spare him. As the days went on, he sank lower and lower into gloom and dreary forebodings. But, since George's departure and Tom's death, he had lost the habit of easing himself of his griefs by talking about them. He could not speak, even to Brown; and Fanny Brawne was the last person to whom he could tell his fears in such a case, naturally.

Brown has left an account of these miserable days as they appeared to him. He speaks of Keats's inability to work, of his penniless condition, of the blighting of all his hopes. Brown did his best to comfort, but what could he really do except lend his friend money, which he had done and continued doing at intervals. Here is a part of what he wrote concerning this time:

> [1] "All that a friend could say, or offer, or urge was not enough to heal his many wounds. He listened, and, in kindness, or soothed by kindness, showed tranquility, but nothing from a friend could relieve him, except on a matter of inferior trouble. He was too thoughtful or too unquiet; and he began to be reckless of health. Among other proofs of recklessness, he was secretly taking, at times, a few drops of laudanum to keep up his spirits. It was discovered by accident, and without delay revealed to me. He needed not to be warned of the danger of such a habit; but I rejoiced at his promise never to take another drop without my knowledge; for nothing could induce him to break his word when once given, — which was a difficulty. Still, at the very moment of my being rejoiced, this was an additional proof of his rooted misery."

[1] Quoted in Sir Sidney Colvin's *Life of Keats.*

It was doubtless of this period that Haydon was speaking when he told his obvious lie — a lie sprung from his immoral and incurable habit of exaggeration — of Keats's flying to dissipation as a relief. "For six weeks," says Haydon, "he was scarcely sober"; an absolute untruth, as we have Brown's testimony to prove. Such a thing, had it been true, could not have been kept from Mrs. Brawne and Fanny, in the close intimacy in which the two households lived. And is it likely that Mrs. Brawne would have permitted, or Fanny desired, the engagement to continue under such circumstances? A man can hide the fact that he is taking mild doses of laudanum; but a drunken man under one's roof, even with the precaution of separate front doors, is something which very soon proclaims itself.

The worst torture of Keats's condition was his growing jealousy of Fanny Brawne. One of the secondary symptoms of tuberculosis is a tendency to suspicion; and Keats had always been of a suspicious nature. Now he had no sensible George, no understanding Tom, to reason him out of his false impressions. He was not yet so ill that he could not keep himself from blaming Fanny Brawne to Brown. He suffered alone and in silence, but he suffered with a fearful intensity. Two poems appear to belong to this period — must, indeed, belong to it, for he does not seem to have written any poems after his first hæmorrhage. Both these poems tell the same story.

The first, known as *Lines to Fanny*, if we may take Lord Houghton's date, "October, 1819," as correct, must have been written shortly after his return to Hampstead. Buxton Forman attributes it to the College Street week, because in Keats's letter from there to Miss Brawne, written on October thirteenth, he tells her that he has just been copying some verses out fair. But this I am sure is a mistake. The letter is written in no such disconsolate mood as the poem, and in the poem Keats says that he has seen Miss Brawne only an hour before, which he certainly had not done on October thirteenth, nor even on the twelfth,

nor the eleventh, and it could not have been written on the tenth, when he wrote *The day is gone*, for the mood of the *Lines* is utterly at variance with the mood of the sonnet, and that the latter mood held, the letter of the eleventh proves. Yet the *Lines* must have been written quite soon after he came back to Wentworth Place, for, although there is dejection in them, there is no bitterness.

Quite unlike the *Lines*, is the terrible sonnet *To Fanny*, which begins:

> "I cry your mercy — pity — love! aye, love!
> Merciful love that tantalizes not."

This sonnet is all bitterness, and longing, agonizing, fevered love. He cries to Fanny:

> "Yourself — your soul — in pity give me all,
> Withhold no atom's atom or I die,
> Or living on perhaps, your wretched thrall,
> Forget, in the mist of idle misery,
> Life's purposes, — the palate of my mind
> Losing its gust, and my ambition blind!"

The last two lines here seem to date the sonnet as having been written in mid-November.

A fragment of seven and a half lines is jotted down on one of the pages of the *Cap and Bells*.[1] It is one of the bitterest of all Keats's personal expressions. Here is the constant, haunting thought of death, here is the profound distrust of Fanny Brawne, and here is something worse than either — the tortured man imagining, and almost glad to imagine, an anguish of remorse for the woman he loves. To appreciate Keats's agony, one must know these lines:

> "This living hand, now warm and capable
> Of earnest grasping, would, if it were cold
> And in the icy silence of the tomb,
> So haunt thy days and chill thy dreaming nights

[1] The poem is written upside down on the page which contains Stanza LI. As the sheet is octavo, there is no room for more writing on the page.

That thou would[st] wish thine own heart dry of blood
So in my veins red life might stream again,
And thou be conscience-calm'd — see here it is —
I hold it toward you."

A tentative suggestion made by Sir Sidney Colvin is that these lines may have been a fragment of the projected drama on the Earl of Leicester, but considering what we know of Keats's state of mind at this time, the idea is, I think, quite untenable.[1]

Sir Sidney Colvin thinks that it did not occur to Keats as possible that "at the present ebb-tide of his fortunes," he "might win peace by marriage with the object of his passion." I think nothing else occurred to him day and night. The fact that the Brawne family had enough to live on comfortably, leads Sir Sidney to remark of Fanny: "What his instincts of honour and independence forbade him to ask, hers of tenderness could perhaps hardly be expected to offer." But it was Mrs. Brawne's money, not Fanny's; and is it to be supposed that any sensible mother (unless, indeed, she were supersensible and possessed of the prophesying powers of a Sibyl) would have suggested, or permitted her daughter to suggest, such a mad thing? They could not know that John Keats, living next door, was one of the greatest of English poets. What they saw was a penniless young man, in a very indifferent state of health. Fanny was only nineteen and Keats hardly twenty-four, and Mrs. Brawne cannot but have thought that there was plenty of time to think of marriage in a few years, the moment was most unpropitious, the young couple would be in a better position later on, in all probability. Also, Fanny lived in an age when well-brought-up daughters in her class of life did not jump over the traces and marry offhand; and suppose Fanny had happened to do this, neither

[1] Since the above was put in type, I have seen the holograph manuscript of this page of the *Cap and Bells*, which proves conclusively that the lines were written before Keats had composed Stanza LII.

she nor Keats had the money to run away, and was it to be contemplated that Fanny should move next door and let Brown support the pair of them! The idea is absurd. Fanny was not Harriet Westbrook, and Keats was no Shelley. They each did the best they could, as I think any one not hoodwinked by an unreasoning love for Keats can see.

Notwithstanding his misery, Keats made a brave attempt to keep up in the face of the world, his world of friends and acquaintances who did not see him so constantly as to suspect his condition. Sir Sidney Colvin entirely misreads a letter to Severn, written on Monday morning, December sixth. In this letter, Keats tells Severn that he is coming round soon to see his picture, the *Cave of Despair*, and at the end, with a touch of his old humour which did not quite desert him when speaking to outsiders until the very end, he asks Severn to come with him to see a poem which he has hung up in the Lecture Room of the Surrey Institution in competition for a prize, and adds:

> "I have many Rivals — the most threatening are An Ode to Lord Castlereagh, and a new series of Hymns for the New, new Jerusalem Chapel. You had best put me into your Cave of despair."

Keats's postulate does not refer to his real state of mind, as Sir Sidney supposes, he is merely carrying on the joke of the prize poem with a mock fear at such formidable rivals. I make this point simply to show that he was not in the habit of making a confidant of Severn.

While Keats's inner life was undergoing such throes, while to himself he was engulfed in a passionate tragedy, his outward life was calm enough. Brown had finished his fair transcript of *Otho the Great*, and taken it to Elliston, the manager of Drury Lane, and Elliston had accepted it with a proviso: he could not bring it out until the following season. This was very disagreeable news for Keats and Brown, particularly as Kean had postponed his journey to

America until the next year. There was some delay in the final decision, and during that time the young men nerved themselves to deliver an ultimatum. The tragedy must be brought out that season or they would offer it to Covent Garden, in the hope that Macready would take the chief part. In spite of Keats's great preference for Kean, he wrote to Rice that "'Twould do one's heart good to see Macready in Ludolph." Having arrived at this opinion, Keats at once set about improving the play. On Monday, December twentieth, he wrote to his sister that he had been very busy and should be for some time "preparing some Poems to come out in the Spring, and also in brightening the interest of our Tragedy." But Elliston was adamant, the young men took back their play, and there all knowledge of it ceases. Probably Covent Garden refused it, for, as I have already mentioned, it was never produced.

From this letter to Fanny, it is evident that Keats's determination not to publish any of the poems he had on hand, expressed in his letter to Taylor of November seventeenth, had been over-ruled, and a new volume decided upon. If Keats did any work during January, it was probably confined to a revision of his old poems.

Keats tells his sister an amusing little anecdote in this letter which must be given in his own words:

> "My hopes of success in the literary world are now better than ever. Mr. Abbey, on my calling on him lately, appeared anxious I should apply myself to something else — He mentioned Tea Brokerage. I supposed he might perhaps mean to give me the Brokerage of his concern which might be executed with little trouble and a good profit; and therefore said I should have no objection to it, especially as at the same time it occurred to me that I might make over the business to George — I questioned him about it a few days after. His mind takes odd turns. When I became a Suitor he became coy. He did not seem so much inclined to serve me. He described what I should have to do in the progress of business. It will not suit me. I have given it up."

What Abbey probably had in mind was that Keats should become a travelling salesman for the London trade, what was, and probably still is, called in England, a "town traveller." The picture of Keats driving up and down London and the near-by suburbs in a gig, purveying samples of tea, is a strange one, as Abbey doubtless realized when he came to think it over. And yet I think it was, in some sort, a moral lack in Keats that he, up to his eyes in debt, did not at least try what he could do with the job. His health is his only excuse, and we may make it for him; it was enough. Still, it must be admitted that, as regards his finances, Keats's sense of honour and justice was too often in abeyance. He disliked obligation, but consented to it rather than alter his mode of life a tittle.

By the middle of December, Keats's throat was again giving trouble, and following his doctor's advice he had "a warm great coat" made and provided himself with thick shoes. Useless precautions! The throat which, he says, "on exertion or cold continually threatens me" got no better.

Christmas came and went. Keats dined on Christmas Day with the Dilkes, in company, we may presume, with the Brawnes. Suddenly, early in January, George appeared in London. Whether or not he had heralded his coming by a letter to Keats or Mrs. Wylie, no one says, but it seems likely that he had, for Mrs. Wylie had had a letter from him in the middle of December. Heralded or not, here he was. George had got heartily sick of waiting for Abbey to forward to him the money promised. Keats had sent him one hundred pounds, drawn from Tom's undivided estate, but what George desired was to have the estate divided and obtain his share of it at once. The one hundred pounds sent by John was but a drop in the bucket of George's expectations and he had come to the conclusion that, if he were to get what he wanted, he must cross the ocean and fetch it himself.

The financial situation of the Keats children, if we can put implicit faith in George's statement of it made to Dilke in 1824,[1] was somewhat as follows (I say somewhat, because George himself was not certain of the earlier sums. He qualifies his figures by saying "presuming" them to be so and so, "probably" I had such and such, "I do not remember" the amount, "suppose" it to have been this or that. A most unsatisfactory kind of accounting): On Mrs. Jennings's death, the children had each a capital of fifteen hundred pounds, of which Abbey was the trustee. This seems to have included the sum received by Mrs. Jennings from her husband, and the sum bequeathed to Mrs. Rawlings with reversion to her children.[2] The thousand pounds each, directly bequeathed to his grandchildren by Mr. Jennings, is omitted from the calculation, as it could not be inherited until Fanny Keats came of age; and the undivided residue of Mr. Jennings's estate was hopelessly tied up by the dilatory methods of the Court of Chancery.

At the time of George's going to America, John had, in various ways, chiefly through his apprenticeship and tuition fees, but also by over-spending his income, reduced his capital to five hundred pounds, out of which he had lent two hundred. George had spent little of his money himself, but he had advanced a considerable sum to John and Tom, for Tom had not only the expenses of illness to meet, he, also, had spent far more than his income. George, wishing to take ready money with him, sold his stock, by doing which he realized an extra hundred pounds, which hundred pounds he employed in paying various debts contracted by his brothers. He left five hundred pounds behind him for John's benefit (whose capital at this time amounted to no more than three hundred pounds), four hundred of which was his own money, and one hundred pounds from Tom's share of the general fund paid him by Abbey because of what he had advanced to Tom, and set

[1] Author's Collection. [2] See Vol. I, pp. 26–27.

sail for America with eleven hundred pounds to start his new life upon, all of which he lost in the boat venture entered into at Audubon's suggestion.

Evidently George, in 1824, thought that his brothers were deeply in his debt. Perhaps they were, but there seems to be another side to the question. George had probably forgotten a letter he had written to John at Teignmouth in 1818,[1] but a copy of it is still extant,[2] and in it George says:

> "I am about paying your's as well as Tom's bills, of which I shall keep regular accounts and for the sake of justice and a future proper understanding I intend calculating the probable amount Tom and I are indebted to you, something of this kind must be done, or at the end of two or three years we shall be all at sixes and sevens."

Two years had passed, and they were all at sixes and sevens. By this time, George seems to have entirely forgotten that he had ever been indebted to John at all. Very likely the debts to and fro between them had left George John's creditor to some extent. But what that extent was, George himself did not know. He says that up to the moment of his departure the brothers had had everything in common. When, in January, 1820, George returned to England, Tom's estate, after all the debts contracted by him had been paid, amounted to eleven hundred pounds. Out of this sum, John had drawn a hundred pounds for himself, having apparently entirely spent, or lent, the three hundred pounds George says he had a year and a half before. He had also drawn a second hundred pounds, which he had sent to George.

George's first act on his return was to go over the accounts of Tom's property and make a proper division of the whole. He immediately gave a hundred pounds into Abbey's hands for his sister, to balance the like sums taken by

[1] See Vol. I, p. 605. [2] Author's Collection.

John and himself. He then proceeded to divide the remainder, eight hundred pounds, into three equal parts, which should have given each of them two hundred and sixty-odd pounds. (In his explanation, George, never too accurate, advances the divided shares to two hundred and seventy each, for the purpose, one supposes, of a simpler calculation.) At this point he suggested to John that he should reserve a hundred pounds of his third for immediate use, and place the remainder in his, George's, hands for him to take to America and invest in whatever business he might embark upon. John, generous to a fault, and a baby where money was concerned, consented readily to this proposition. George also took back the one hundred pounds given him by Abbey out of Tom's money the year before "in consideration of what I had done for Tom." (What had become of the remaining four hundred pounds also left behind the year before, he does not say. Very likely part of it had been spent in England by John and Tom, and part may have been forwarded to him in America.) Counting the hundred pounds recently sent him by John, George had now from Tom's estate five hundred and forty pounds (his calculation, it was really five hundred and thirty-two pounds), which, with the previous one hundred pounds given him by Abbey, brought his total up to six hundred and forty pounds. To this, Abbey, probably as a speculation, added sixty-odd pounds for himself, so bringing the sum to the round figure of seven hundred pounds, with which capital George started back to America in hopes this time of making a success where before he had met with such signal disaster.

This is the story, as far as it is possible to learn it, of those financial transactions which so greatly incensed Keats's friends. There is no doubt that George hoped to increase John's capital along with his own, and had every intention of treating his brother with the utmost fairness. But it is also true that, at a time when John was dying and

in grievous need of funds, George had money of his which would have made all the difference could he have obtained it. George did not know the extent of his need, nor how ill he was, and having sunk the money in another boat speculation was powerless to remit what he had not at the moment got. In the end, he squarely discharged his brother's posthumous debts; but even this action could not restore to him the friendship of Brown, Severn, Haslam, and others who were firmly persuaded of his dishonesty. Dilke, Reynolds, and Rice, on the other hand, exonerated George entirely after reading his explanation, which I have just paraphrased.

George's chief fault seems to have lain in not explaining matters fully to John while he was in England. His explanation to Dilke of this side of the affair was:

> "John himself was ignorant of the real state of his funds, it was so painful a subject and in our private communications he was so extremely melancholy that I always had to shew him the pleasing side of things; when I left London I had not courage to say that the 700£ I had obtained was not all ours by right, he therefore imagined it was, but he never thought and never could have informed anyone that the whole was his. I never considered it necessary to let him know the rights of it, since I did not intend to limit my remittances but by my means . . . it was always my intention to keep him under the idea that I was in his debt."

This was most mistaken kindness on George's part, and I fear we cannot free his conduct from a grain of self-interest and some moral cowardice. But there is no doubt that he was fully persuaded at the time that John would benefit in the end, as he undoubtedly would have done had he lived a few years longer. For George did finally succeed, becoming the managing partner in a flourishing flour- and saw-mill concern which yielded him ample returns on his money.

Fanny Brawne, who, of all people, had reason to blame

George, spoke of him with wise and tempered justice. To be sure, her correspondent was his sister, which may have affected her expression; but, considering that she was writing only a few days after hearing of Keats's death, it seems probable that she spoke her mind with conviction. What she said was this:

> "George . . . is no favorite of mine and he never liked me so that I am not likely to say too much in his favour . . . but I must say I think he is more blamed than he should be. I think him extravagant . . . but people in their zeal make him out much worse than that — Soon after . . . Tom died . . . John wrote to him offering him any assistance or money in his power. At that time he was not engaged to me and having just lost one brother felt all his affection turned toward the one remaining — George I dare say at first had no thoughts of accepting his offers but when his affairs did not succeed and he had a wife and child to support I cannot wonder that he should consider them first . . . By that time he wished to marry himself but he could not refuse the money."

It was this letter I had in mind when I said, some time ago,[1] that Keats was not quite candid with Fanny Brawne in the matter of his offer of assistance to George sent from Winchester. The offer was made when he was endeavoring to wean himself from Miss Brawne. That he deeply regretted it, we can very well believe, but the fact that he had made it was undoubtedly why he consented to George's proposition. He had given his word, and we saw a few pages back what Brown said about his invariably living up to his word when once given.

I have dealt with this circumstance at so much length, because no other of Keats's biographers has done more than glance at it. It is the least understood of the facts of Keats's life; but that it is an exceedingly important fact, no one can fail to see. It filled his last year with

[1] See Vol. II, p. 349.

a sordid misery which he might have been spared, and, after his death, brought about a feud among his friends that has deprived the world of a biography written by any one who had known him. In spite of George's asseverations, Keats did at last come to believe that the seven hundred pounds had all been his, and he apparently told his friends as much. For Keats to lose his implicit faith in his brother was a terrible thing, and uninformed as he was, he did lose it to a certain extent, although not until later, when George's failure to come to his aid — a failure the cause of which he never perfectly realized — left him puzzled and surprised, and half unconsciously loosened the tie between them in Keats's mind. It was not to George that he poured out his heart in the first weeks of his Italian journey; it was to Brown.

The weeks which George spent in London are all carefully recorded in a delightful letter which John wrote to his sister-in-law in America. Keats tries to be jocular, but he cannot quite keep his morbidness from creeping in, here and there. George, who was anxious to see as many of his old friends as possible, went out to Deptford, where Haslam, who had been married on October sixteenth, now lived. Keats had not, it would seem, gone to the wedding, and he could not bring himself to go to Deptford now with George. He could not face the sight of a couple still in honeymoon temper, and we can easily see why. Keats tells Georgiana, who had accused him of filling his letters with "Haydon & Co.," that he is very idle, and that he never sees Haydon or Co. But he was seeing a few people nevertheless, principally on George's account. The brothers went about a good deal among their various friends; we are told of a dinner at Taylor's, "a pianoforte hop" at Dilke's, of going to the play with Mrs. Wylie; but beneath Keats's account of these mild gaieties, there is the ever-present undercurrent of bitterness and gloom. He looked out on the world with jaundiced eyes. All was tasteless,

because he was a very sick man and a miserably unhappy one. Georgiana might well have taken alarm at this passage:

> "I am tired of the theatres. Almost all parties I may chance to fall into I know by heart . . . If I go to Hunt's, I run my head into many tunes heard before, old puns and old music; to Haydon's worn-out discourses of poetry and painting. The Miss R[eynolds]'s I am afraid to speak to, for fear of some sickly reiteration of phrase or sentiment . . . At Dilke's I fall foul of politics. 'Tis best to remain aloof from people and like their good parts without being eternally troubled with the dull process of their every-day lives . . . All I can say is that, standing at Charing Cross and looking east, west, north, and south I see nothing but dulness."

The letter was begun on Thursday, January thirteenth, and continued at intervals for two weeks. On Friday, January twenty-eighth, Keats saw George off to Liverpool on the "Royal Alexander" coach leaving the King's Arms, Snow Hill, at six in the morning. His last entry to his sister-in-law is dated on that day, after his return to Hampstead. He had forgotten to give George the letter before he started, and closes in a hurry so that it may be sure to catch the mail that evening and reach George before he sailed. It must have done so, for the mail was due in Liverpool at three o'clock on Sunday morning, and George himself had only got there at four the afternoon before. On that same Sunday, George wrote to John,[1] telling him that he had had a cold ride, but had gone immediately upon his arrival to see about sailings and had secured a passage in the "Courier" packet, leaving on the following Tuesday, before he went to bed.

One thing Keats told Georgiana at the very end of his letter. It was that he intended "to retire into the country." Evidently Keats had come to the conclusion that his only

[1] Unpublished letter. Day Collection.

hope of getting on his feet again mentally was to reproduce somewhere the weeks in Winchester.

George's visit had not been to either of the brothers what they might have expected. George had found John very much changed. "He was not the same person," he told Dilke many years afterwards, "altho' his reception of me was as warm as heart could wish, he did not speak with his former openness and unreserve, he had lost the reviving custom of venting his griefs." It is not difficult to see why this was. Keats needed the money he felt constrained to let George have, and George permitted his brother to see that he did not like Fanny Brawne. George appears to have been told of the engagement, but his attitude can be judged by the fact that, in sending his greetings to various friends in the Liverpool letter, all he can bring himself to say of the Brawnes is "Rem^{s} to your neighbours." In the following November, he wrote to John: "If we meet a safe opportunity for England we will send Miss Brawne an india Crape dress or marino shawl or something scarce with you, but cheap with us. She has our thanks for her kindness during your illness." Let us hope John never received this letter, or, if it followed him to Rome, that it was never read. Four years later, George speaks of the Brawnes to Dilke as "Mrs. Brawne and her lovely daughter," but the epithet rings a little false, and by that time George's opinion of Miss Brawne was of no consequence to anyone.

George took more to America with him than money; he took copies of many of Keats's poems which he had been at pains to make while in London, for, in spite of the questionable ethics of his conduct, his affection for his brother and interest in his work was genuine and never wavered.

On Thursday, February third, the crash came. The weather had been very changeable. In the middle of January there had been snow, Keats had told Georgiana that "The sun comes upon the snow and makes a prettier

candy than we have on twelfth-night cakes." It had still been cold when George started for Liverpool; but suddenly there came a thaw, the kind of thaw which tempts to imprudence and ill rewards confidence. On this Thursday, Keats had gone to town, and had most unwisely left off his warm greatcoat. He returned by a late stage, and, according to his usual practice, on the top of it. Thaw though it was, the night air was very different from that of the previous day. It was raw, damp, and penetrating, and Keats was without his greatcoat. The result was that he caught a bad chill. Brown's account of this evening is well known, but it must be repeated again here. It is as follows:

> "At eleven o'clock, he came into the house in a state that looked like fierce intoxication. Such a state in him, I knew, was impossible; it therefore was the more fearful. I asked hurriedly, 'What is the matter? you are fevered?' 'Yes, yes,' he answered, 'I was on the outside of the stage this bitter day till I was severely chilled, — but now I don't feel it. Fevered! — of course, a little.' He mildly and instantly yielded, a property in his nature towards any friend, to my request that he should go to bed. I entered his chamber as he leapt into bed. On entering the cold sheets, before his head was on the pillow, he slightly coughed, and I heard him say, — 'That is blood from my mouth.' I went towards him; he was examining a single drop of blood upon the sheet. 'Bring me the candle, Brown, and let me see this blood.' After regarding it steadfastly he looked up in my face, with a calmness of countenance that I can never forget, and said, — 'I know the colour of that blood; — it is arterial blood; — I cannot be deceived in that colour; — that drop of blood is my death-warrant; — I must die.' I ran for a surgeon; my friend was bled; and, at five in the morning, I left him after he had been some time in a quiet sleep."

The moment Keats had for months secretly dreaded had come, but the marvel is that it had delayed so long. Yet,

even now, the doctors refused to consider his attack an evidence of pulmonary tuberculosis. They palliated the symptoms, and denied the cause.

The very next day, although kept in bed, Keats was able to write to Miss Brawne:

> "DEAREST FANNY, I shall send this the moment you return. They say I must remain confined to this room for some time. The consciousness that you love me will make a pleasant prison of the house next to yours. You must come and see me frequently: this evening without fail — when you must not mind my speaking in a low tone for I am ordered to do so though I *can* speak out.
>
> Yours ever
> sweetest love. —
> J. KEATS."

At the bottom of the page, Keats wrote "turn over," and on the other side of the sheet continued:

> "Perhaps your Mother is not at home and so you must wait till she comes. You must see me to-night and let me hear you say you will come to-morrow.
>
> Brown said you were all out. I have been looking for the stage the whole afternoon. Had I known this I could not have remain'd so silent all day."

By this letter we plainly see that, however jealous Keats had sometimes been, however unworthily he had occasionally been led to think of Miss Brawne, the moment he was in serious trouble he turned to her with longing and confidence. The last sentence of his note seems to imply a previous note from Fanny, telling him that she had been at home all day, but was going out for a little while.

From this fourth of February, life for Keats settled itself for nearly two months to an entirely different routine, the routine of a carefully cherished invalid. Brown was indefatigable in his attentions, but in one particular his tact failed, and inexperience of illness led him into a blunder.

He had been amusing himself by copying heads from engravings of Hogarth s pictures. One, newly purchased, was the *Methodist Meeting*. This picture haunted Keats, and, sick as he was, gave him what he called a "psalm-singing night-mare," it was in fact responsible for some very uncomfortable nights, yet it does not seem to have occurred to Brown to keep it out of sight.

From the very first, the Brawnes, both mother and daughter, were unwearied in their efforts to do everything possible for Keats. Fanny ceased entirely her excursions to town, and held herself ready to come and see her lover at whatever time in the day he wanted her. This visit was a daily one, except on certain occasions when Brown or the doctor thought it wiser for her not to come. But whether she came or not, she wrote. We have none of her notes, sent by hand to the invalid, but from the tenor of Keats's answers we know them to have been warm and reassuring ones. Now it was she who worried, fearing that her lover might find her cold. Keats's reply to one such letter tells us much:

> "I wish I had read your note before you went last night that I might have assured you how far I was from suspecting any coldness. You had a just right to be a little silent to one who speaks so plainly to you. You must believe — you shall, you will — that I can do nothing, say nothing, think nothing of you but what has its spring in the Love which has so long been my pleasure and torment. On the night I was taken ill — when so violent a rush of blood came to my Lungs that I felt nearly suffocated — I assure you I felt it possible I might not survive, and at that moment thought of nothing but you. When I said to Brown 'this is unfortunate' I thought of you. 'Tis true that since the first two or three days other subjects have entered my head. I shall be looking forward to Health and the Spring and a regular routine of our old Walks."

Keats made every effort to keep both Miss Brawne and

his sister from realizing the extent of his fears for himself. He tells his sister that everybody has a cold, even Brown is "a little wheezy." But although the doctor's diagnosis gave his fears no encouragement, Keats's medical studies forbade him to take a sanguine view of his condition. So squarely did he regard his case, that he hinted to Fanny Brawne that it might be wiser for her to terminate their engagement. Her reply was a flat negative. His answer to this shows his intense relief:

> "How hurt I should have been had you ever acceded to what is, notwithstanding, very reasonable! How much the more do I love you from the general result! . . . My greatest torment since I have known you has been the fear of you being a little inclined to the Cressid; but that suspicion I dismiss utterly and remain happy in the surety of your Love, which I assure you is as much a wonder to me as a delight. Send me the words 'Good night' to put under my pillow."

After this, Fanny Brawne sent him a written "Good night" every evening.

Keats was kept in bed for two days, but on the third he was allowed to lie in the front parlour on the sofa made up as a bed. Of this removal, he wrote to his sister, in his old vein of quaint humour, partly the result of his change of surroundings, undoubtedly, but even more certainly of his determination not to let the young girl worry about him:

> "How much more comfortable than a dull room upstairs, where one gets tired of the pattern of the bed curtains. Besides I see all that passes — for instance now, this morning — if I had been in my own room I should not have seen the coals brought in. On sunday between the hours of twelve and one I descried a Pot boy. I conjectured it might be the one o'clock beer — Old women with bobbins and red cloaks and unpresuming bonnets I see creeping about the heath. Gipseys after hare skins and silver spoons. Then goes by a fellow with a wooden clock under his arm that

> strikes a hundred and more. Then comes the old French emigrant (who has been very well to do in France) with his hands joined behind on his hips, and his face full of political schemes . . . As for those fellows the Brickmakers they are always passing to and fro."

This is by no means the end of Keats's list of what his window revealed, but it will serve to show how indomitable a will he opposed to illness when it finally came. Either his weakened vitality lessened his torments of mind and sex, or Fanny Brawne's tenderness had raised him on so high a pinnacle of security that he could defy them. Probably they were equal agents in the better balance he certainly had during the weeks of his confinement.

On Thursday, the tenth, he was well enough to walk round the garden for a quarter of an hour, and this he was able to repeat, weather permitting, on subsequent days. So far his improvement went, but no farther, and he began to chafe a little at the apparent halt in his recovery. The powers that were — probably the doctor, Brown, and Mrs. Brawne — put their heads together and decided that to see Fanny every day was too exciting, so her visits were ordered to be spaced a little more widely. "According to all appearances I am to be separated from you as much as possible," he wrote her. "How I shall be able to bear it, or whether it will not be worse than your presence now and then, I cannot tell," and he urges her no longer to refrain from going to town. He thinks she had better not come before "tomorrow evening," but begs her to send "without fail a good night." At the end of the letter, his sense of honour forces him once more to do the decent thing:

> "You know our situation — what hope is there if I should be recovered ever so soon — my very health will not suffer me to make any great exertion. I am recommended not even to read poetry, much less write it. I wish I had even a little hope. I cannot say forget me — but I would mention that there are impossibilities in this world."

Fanny's counter to this was to accuse him of wishing to forget her. He wrote again, assuring her that he had thought only of her; for himself:

> "I should as soon think of choosing to die as to part from you."

Yet he feels constrained to add:

> "Believe too my Love that our friends think and speak for the best, and if their best is not our best it is not their fault."

But Fanny Brawne, we remember, was not easily turned aside from any course of action she had determined upon, and how much less in such a thing as marriage. She must have told Keats that she did not care a button what any one said, for this is his reply:

> "Then all we have to do is to be patient. Whatever violence I may sometimes do myself by hinting at what would appear to any one but ourselves a matter of necessity, I do not think I could bear any approach of a thought of losing you."

So things resumed what was become their normal habit. Miss Brawne came frequently and wrote every night. She would also go out into the garden in order that Keats might see her from the back parlour where he seems to have taken to sitting. Sometimes she would appear at her window when he, in his turn, was taking a turn outdoors.

Two weeks after his hæmorrhage, on February sixteenth, he wrote to Rice, a rather sad letter which contains this wistful paragraph:

> "How astonishingly (here I must premise that illness, as far as I can judge in so short a time, has relieved my mind of a load of deceptive thoughts and images, and makes me perceive things in a truer light), — how astonishingly does the chance of leaving the world impress a sense of its

natural beauties upon us! . . . I muse with the greatest affection on every flower I have known from my infancy — their shapes and colours are as new to me as if I had just created them with a superhuman fancy . . . I have seen foreign flowers in hothouses, of the most beautiful nature, but I do not care a straw for them. The simple flowers of our Spring are what I want to see again."

The treatment of tuberculosis in the early nineteenth century was diametrically opposed to that of the present day. It seems to have been entirely focussed on the symptoms of the disease, not at all on the disease itself. If the patient had a hæmorrhage, he was promptly bled, and his food reduced to a minimum and vegetable at that. Keats speaks of the "small quantity of food to which I am obliged to confine myself: I am sure a mouse would starve upon it." By this process of attrition the patient was so wasted that the hæmorrhages, at least in the early stages of illness, were often temporarily diminished, whereat the doctor rejoiced and declared that his remedies were taking effect. Keats was so extraordinarily vigorous a man that there is little doubt that, under the régime prescribed for tuberculous patients to-day, he would have lived for many years, if not have recovered entirely. As it was, everything was done to kill him and nothing to cure. Throughout this attack, we hear a great deal of the starvation diet, "living on pseudo-victuals," Keats calls it, and he warns Fanny Brawne that, if she finds him "low-spirited," she must ascribe it to the medicine he is taking "which is of a nerve-shaking nature." The doctors assured him that there was "very little the matter" with him, but he adds, with a shrewdness beyond their wisdom: "I cannot believe them till the weight and tightness of my Chest is mitigated."

Two great obstructions to recovery were constantly preying upon him. One of his notes to Fanny Brawne contains this passage:

> "How illness stands as a barrier betwixt me and you! Even if I was well — I must make myself as good a Philosopher as possible. Now I have had opportunities of passing nights anxious and awake I have found other thoughts obtrude upon me. 'If I should die,' said I to myself, 'I have left no immortal work behind me — nothing to make my friends proud of my memory — but I have lov'd the principle of beauty in all things, and if I had had time I would have made myself remember'd."

Poor fellow, if only he could have known the verdict of posterity, and how many of these same friends are remembered solely because of their connection with him!

As time went on, and Keats did not seem to gain, Miss Brawne became alarmed and began to fear that something was being kept from her. Toward the end of February, she demanded to know the truth. To this, Keats answered:

> "Indeed I will not deceive you in respect to my health. This is the fact as far as I know. I have been confined three weeks and am not yet well — this proves that there is something wrong about me which my constitution will either conquer or give way to. Let us hope for the best."

Still, even as he writes, a thrush is singing, and he tells Fanny not to send back any more of his books: "I have a great pleasure in the thought of you looking on them."

On February twenty-third or twenty-fifth (the letter is undated, and the postmark difficult to read), Keats wrote to Reynolds, who was planning a trip to Brussels. Among other things which Keats says in this letter is the following interesting statement:

> "I hope I shall soon be well enough to proceed with my fa[e]ries and set you about the notes on Sundays and Stray-days."

The "faeries" were, of course, those in the *Cap and Bells*. The scheme of the poem was to include a series of "notes" to give a mock appearance of erudition to the poem and so

add to the joke. Apparently Reynolds, with his keen wit, was to be responsible for these. This passage is particularly important, for it proves that Keats's erstwhile pettishness with the poem had quite disappeared, and that he had every intention of finishing it when he should be well enough to write again.

As soon as Keats was able to see people, which seems to have been fairly soon after his attack, his friends made a point of coming out to see him. Even Mrs. Wylie came, everybody indeed but Fanny Keats, poor girl. Abbey appears to have recognized no reason for her to go and see her brother, and she was still under age, and entirely subject to his orders. How Mrs. Jennings would have felt if she could have seen the working out of her plan for the protection and comfort of her grandchildren, is something not pleasant to speculate upon.

Before Mrs. Wylie had made her first visit, some time, probably, toward the end of February, Keats wrote her a letter.[1] A small fragment of this letter was published by Buxton Forman, evidently all he had seen, and, having nothing to go upon, he attributed it to quite a wrong date. The whole of the letter has never been printed, and as so small a portion was published by Buxton Forman, I give it here in full.

"Wentworth Place
Friday Morn.

MY DEAR MRS. WYLIE.

I have been very negligent in not letting you hear from me for so long a time considering the anxiety I know you feel for me. Charles has been here this morning and will tell you that I am better. Just as he came in I was sitting down to write to you, and I shall not let his visit supersede these few lines. Charles enquired whether I had heard from George. It is impossible to guess whether he has landed yet, and if he has it will take at least a month for any

[1] Day Collection.

communication to reach us. I hope you keep your spirits a great height above freezing point and live in expectation of good news next summer. Louisville is not such a Monstrous distance: if Georgiana liv'd at York it would be just as far off. You see George will make nothing of the journey here and back. His absence will have been perhaps a fortunate thing for Georgiana, for the pleasure of his return will be so great that it will wipe away the consciousness of many troubles felt before very deeply. She will see him return'd from us and be convinced that the separation is not so very formidable although the Atlantic is between. If George succeeds it will be better certainly that they should stop in America: if not why not return? It is better in ill luck to have at least the comfort of ones friends than to be ship-wreck'd among Americans. But I have good hopes as far as I can judge from what I have heard from George. He should by this time be taught Alertness and Carefulness — If they should stop in America for five or six years let us hope they may have about Three Children: then the eldest will be getting old enough to be society. The very crying will keep their ears employed, and their spirits from being melancholy. Mrs. Millar I hear continues confined to her Chamber — if she would take my advice I should recommend her to keep it till the middle of April and then go to some Sea-town in Devonshire which is sheltered from the east wind — which blows down the channel very briskly even in April. Give my Compliments to Miss Millar and Miss Waldegrave.

Your affectionate friend
JOHN KEATS."

It speaks much for Keats's thoughtful consideration that, ill as he was, he should have written to Mrs. Wylie to relieve her anxiety about George's return voyage.

Try as he would, Keats was himself and had his own temperament to reckon with. It need not surprise us, therefore, to find him imagining a flirtatious tendency in Brown directed towards Fanny Brawne. It was all the merest moonshine, as we know, but he could not get rid of

it. The result was that he decided that Fanny's visits, those visits in which she brought her work and stayed some little time, should be made only when Brown was out of the house. Perhaps it was to reassure him on this score that Miss Brawne gave him a ring. Such a token could not fail of being the greatest comfort to Keats. We do not know how this ring was made, whether it was of plain gold or had some sort of a stone. I incline to think that it was a seal ring, of agate or carnelian, for their joint names seem to have been engraved upon it. The day after receiving it, he wrote to Fanny:

> "The power of your benediction is not of so weak a nature as to pass from the ring in four and twenty hours — it is like a sacred Chalice once consecrated and ever consecrate. I shall kiss your name and mine where your Lips have been."

In another note, which Buxton Forman puts after this one, Keats at last says what Fanny Brawne had been waiting a year to have him say:

> "You uttered a half complaint once that I only lov'd your Beauty. Have I nothing else then to love in you but that? Do I not see a heart naturally furnish'd with wings imprison itself with me? No ill prospect has been able to turn your thoughts a moment from me. This perhaps should be as much a subject of sorrow as joy — but I will not think of that."

A little later on, he writes:

> "How can you bear so long an imprisonment at Hampstead? I shall always remember it with all the gusto that a monopolizing carl should. I could build an Altar to you for it."

Yet how quickly he forgot, we shall soon see. Still we must not blame him; Fanny Brawne did not. She understood his nature, and the nature of his illness, too well.

By the end of February, the outer world began to knock at Keats's door again. Bryan Waller Proctor ("Barry Cornwall"), whom he did not know, sent him his *Sicilian Story*, just published, and, shortly after, his first book, *Marcian Colonna*, in place of a copy sent much earlier by Hunt who had forgotten to deliver it. In the interval between these gifts, Proctor got Hunt to take him to see Keats. Proctor's impression of his host, gained on this and one or two subsequent visits, is particularly interesting, since it shows that to strangers the effect of Keats's personality was the same that it had always been. Proctor describes[1] him thus:

> "I was introduced to him by Leigh Hunt, and found him very pleasant, and free from all affectation in manner and opinion. Indeed it would be difficult to discover a man with a more bright and open countenance. He was always ready to hear and to reply; to discuss, to reason, to admit; and to join in serious talk or common gossip . . . I never encountered a more manly and simple young man.
>
> In person he was short, and had eyes large and wonderfully luminous, and a resolute bearing; not defiant, but well sustained."

Keats considered Proctor's sending him the books "a specimen of great politeness," but the poems themselves he could not like. He wrote to Reynolds:

> "I confess they teaze me — they are composed of amiability, the Seasons, the Leaves, the Moon &c. upon which he rings (according to Hunt's expression) triple bob majors. However that is nothing — I think he likes poetry for its own sake, not his."

Another reminder of the world came in the shape of a hint from his publishers that they should like to start on the printing of his new book as soon as possible. This was welcome, but rather appalling, news; however, before

[1] *Recollections of Men of Letters*, by B. W. Proctor.

anything could be done, Keats was taken suddenly quite ill, not with a hæmorrhage this time, but with something in the nature of a heart attack. It occurred on Monday, March sixth, and on Wednesday, the eighth, he was still so ill that his condition excited real alarm and caused Brown to write the following letter to Taylor:[1]

"Hampstead
Wednesday 8th March.

DEAR TAYLOR,

Poor Keats will be unable to prepare his Poems for the Press for a long time. He was taken on Monday evening with violent palpitations at the heart, and has since remained too weak to get up. I expect Dr. Bree every hour. I am wretchedly depressed.

Your's sincerely,
CHAS BROWN."

On the reverse of the sheet, Brown added:

"If you come, do not let him hear your voice, as the slightest circumstance tending to create surprize, or any other emotion, must be avoided.

C.B.

P.S. Since writing the above, Dr. Bree has been here, and I am rejoiced to say gives very favourable hopes.

C.B."

Two days later, however, Keats was up and about again, and even able to resume his walks in the garden. He was very nervous, but this was laid at the door of his enervating diet. How fearfully wide of the mark Dr. Bree's diagnosis was, can be seen by the following letter, also from Brown to Taylor:[2]

"Hampstead
Friday 10 March

DEAR TAYLOR,

After my dismal note I am glad to be able to give you

[1] Unpublished letter in Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.
[2] *Ibid.*

good news. Keats is so well as to be out of danger. We intend, if the weather remain kindly, to go to the coast of Hants. He walked in the garden to-day. You will suspect I gave a useless alarm, but I wrote at the time I was told it was possible he might suddenly be lost to us in one of those fits. Hessey's letter came, & I opened it, for Keats could not endure even the circumstance of a letter being put in his hands, — nor can he bear it even yet, tho' I consider him perfectly out of danger, & I am happy to tell you that we are now assured there is no pulmonary affection, no organic defect whatever, — the disease is on his *mind*, and there I hope he will soon be cured.

Your's sincerely
CHAS BROWN.

Remember me to Mr. Hessey."

Dr. Bree's name in connection with the case shows that somebody had decided that a more expert opinion than Sawrey's was needed. Robert Bree was a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and a specialist on asthma and other diseases of the respiration. A treatise of his on this subject had, in 1815, reached its fifth edition. Two papers on *The Use of Digitalis in Consumption* show that he had some claim to be considered a specialist in that disease also. But, however eminent, Dr. Bree was certainly a poor diagnostician.

As Keats got better, his mind reverted to his forthcoming book, and he determined to look it over and see that the poems were quite as he wanted them. Woodhouse, as we know, had many copies of Keats's poems, and these seem to have been tentatively put together by the publishers and submitted to him for approval. This manuscript he had passed on to Fanny Brawne, a most natural thing to do, and one which proves her to have been entirely in Keats's confidence as regards his work, something which posterity has been led to doubt. In a note to her which seems to have been written very soon after this seizure, Keats says:

> "I am much better this morning than I was a week ago: indeed I improve a little every day. I rely upon taking a walk with you upon the first of May: in the meantime undergoing a babylonish captivity I shall not be jew enough to hang up my harp upon a willow, but rather endeavour to clear up my arrears in versifying, and with returning health begin upon something new: pursuant to which resolution it will be necessary to have my or rather Taylor's manuscript, which you, if you please, will send me by my Messenger either today or tomorrow . . . If you meet with anything better (worse) than common in your Magazines let me see it."

The last sentence makes it quite clear that Keats and Miss Brawne were in the habit of exchanging opinions on books as well as the books themselves. Such little details as this have been carefully left out of account by writers on Keats. They have believed Fanny Brawne to have been a frivolous and silly girl, and have taken no pains to verify the justness of the charge. That it crumbles to the ground on examination, my readers must by this time be well aware. Why Keats had never been in love before was largely because he had never met a woman possessed of both attraction and brains. Fanny Brawne had both in no mean degree, hence her ever-renewing charm for him.

Another note shows Keats going on mildly with his work:

> "It will be a nice idle amusement to hunt after a motto for my Book which I will have if lucky enough to hit upon a fit one — not intending to write a preface."

The "fit" motto was not found, and the volume appeared without one. Still a third note continues the story. (We must remember that these notes were daily messages, so that several notes means no more than the lapse of as many days.) Miss Brawne seems to have worried lest Keats were over-exerting himself, whereat he answers her:

"I do not at all fatigue myself with writing, having merely to put a line or two here and there, a Task which would worry a stout state of body and mind, but which just suits me as I can do no more."

Earlier in this same note, Keats even allows himself a little real hope, he says:

"Perhaps on your account I have imagined my illness more serious than it is: how horrid was the chance of slipping into the ground instead of into your arms — the difference is amazing Love. Death must come at last; Man must die, as Shallow says; but before that is my fate I fain would try what more pleasures than you have given, so sweet a creature as you can give. Let me have another op[p]ortunity of years before me and I will not die without being remember'd. Take care of yourself dear that we may both be well in the Summer."

It must have been just about this time that Brown wrote again to Taylor.[1] This letter has no date, but its context places it with sufficient exactness:

"DEAR SIR,

Keats has been slowly recovering; yesterday and to-day however he has been greatly altered for the better. He wishes his Poems to be published as soon as convenient to yourself, — the volume to commence with St. Agnes Eve. He was occupied yesterday in revising Lamia. It is not his intention at present to have a Preface, — at least so we talked together to-day. He desires to be remembered. When will you come? for *he* must not venture to Town before we have mild weather, — & when? It is very pleasant at Hampstead — *in our parlour.*

Your's sincerely
CHAS BROWN.

Don't let any one take a Copy of Otho."

Whether Taylor came out or not, no one says, but Keats certainly went in, tempted perhaps by a fortunate change

[1] Unpublished letter in Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.

of weather. A recently discovered letter[1] from Taylor to the poet, John Clare, leaves no doubt on the subject. Writing on Thursday, March sixteenth, Taylor says:

> "Keats came to dine with me the Day before yesterday for the first Time since his Illness — He was sorry he did not see you — When I read Solitude to him he observed that the description too much prevailed over the Sentiment — But never mind that — it is a good Fault."

It was fortunate for Keats that dinner in his day was an afternoon affair, for on that Thursday the sun set at six o'clock, by which hour we may be very sure that he was safely back at Wentworth Place. But, however mild the weather, it was a long way to New Bond Street, and the discussion of his own and other people's poetry was bound to be exciting. Keats seems to have felt the effects of his first outing a little, if we may judge from a note to Miss Brawne which appears to have been written very soon after this. He and Brown were expecting some friends for the evening, evidently, in spite of his fatigue:

> "In consequence of our company I suppose I shall not see you before tomorrow. I am much better to-day — indeed all I have to complain of is want of strength and a little tightness in the Chest. I envied Sam's[2] walk with you to-day; which I will not do again as I may get very tired of envying. I imagine you now sitting in your new black dress which I like so much and if I were a little less selfish and more enthusiastic I should run round and surprise you with a knock at the door. I fear I am too prudent for a dying kind of Lover. Yet, there is a great difference between going off in warm blood like Romeo, and making one's exit like a frog in a frost."

Much as Keats undoubtedly wanted to run round to the Brawnes' and see Fanny, the exertion loomed enormous to

[1] *New Sidelights on Keats, Lamb, and Others. From Letters to J. Clare*, by Edmund Blunden. *The London Mercury*, June, 1921.

[2] Miss Brawne's brother.

him. He was still very weak, that was the long and the short of it. Indeed, it seems as though the work of revising had really been too much for him. And no wonder; revising poems is no such easy matter as Keats, to allay her fears, wanted Fanny Brawne to think. By Monday, March twentieth, he had overdone it, and been commanded by Dr. Bree to write nothing for a time. On that day, notwithstanding orders, he scribbled a short note to his sister, in which he said:

> "According to your desire I write to-day. It must be but a few lines for I have been attacked several times with a palpitation at the heart and the Doctor says I must not make the slightest exertion. I am much the same to-day as I have been for a week past. They say 'tis nothing but debility and will entirely cease on my recovery of my strength which is the object of my present diet. As the Doctor will not suffer me to write I shall ask Mr. Brown to let you hear news of me for the future if I should not get stronger soon."

Apparently Keats had kept on with his work in spite of the palpitations until finally the doctor put his foot down. But it is also possible that these last notes to Fanny Brawne were written at the end of February, and not in March, as Buxton Forman supposes. These hand-written missives, sent from one house to the other, are entirely without dates, not even the days of the week being given. Buxton Forman arranged them as well as he could, and I have seen no reason to change his order. The only actual dates which we have to guide us, in this instance, are the dates on Brown's two letters, that on the letter from Taylor to Clare (none of which Buxton Forman knew of), and that on the letter to Fanny Keats. I have cogitated much on the subject, but have finally concluded that Buxton Forman's arrangement is probably correct, and that the facts are chronologically as I have stated them.

Keats was in a decidedly gloomy frame of mind on that

Monday, but the "present diet" certainly did him good, for on Saturday he was well enough to go to town for the private view of Haydon's finally finished picture, *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem*, at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly.

The Egyptian Hall was a curious building. Its name was derived from its façade, which represented a bad imitation of Egyptian Architecture. For some years, it had housed a miscellaneous collection of objects, collected by the jeweller-naturalist-antiquarian, William Bullock. This "London," or "Bullock's, Museum" was an extremely popular resort in the early years of the nineteenth century. In 1819, the collection was sold at auction and its premises were to let. This was Haydon's opportunity. He immediately hired the large room upstairs for a year from the first of March, 1820, and having not a penny to bless himself with, agreed to pay a rental of three hundred pounds. Haydon's account of the preparation of the room for his huge picture is among the most amusing pages of his *Autobiography*. Suffice it here to say that, by Friday night, March twenty-fourth, the preparations were completed, and on Saturday the hall was opened to the ticket holders for the private view, the public not being admitted until Monday. The private view was an immense success; the street was blocked with carriages, the passages reverberated with voices; it was, says Haydon, "a regular rout at noon-day." The world of fashion had turned out in force. Drama, literature, the arts, the church, the state, and foreign states, all were represented, and there was the Persian Ambassador in a resplendent native costume. "The room was full," declares Haydon, "Keats and Hazlitt were up in a corner, really rejoicing." One wonders if they really were. Hazlitt's opinion, expressed in the *Edinburgh Review* in the following August, is calm; Keats mentions the event to his sister, but conspicuously without comment.

Keats was in no condition to bear the hurly-burly of

such a scene, yet it does not seem to have been so disastrous as might have been expected. A week later, on April first, he is able to tell Fanny Keats that he is getting better every day although subject to faintness and with the tightness in his chest continuing. About this time, Brown wrote to George Keats, informing him of Keats's hæmorrhage, but adding that he was now much better, and could "walk five miles without weariness." One cannot help fancying that Brown stretched his miles out a bit to relieve George's mind. On Wednesday, April twelfth, Keats again wrote to his sister, telling her that he had been to town "once or twice," but that he was not yet able to bear the fatigue of going to Walthamstow.

Of the April weeks, we know little. There are no hand-sent notes to Fanny Brawne, which looks as though Keats were able to go about to a certain extent, and he completed the revision of his poems and sent them to Taylor who was thereupon to make up the volume. Keats's confidence in his judgment seems to have greatly pleased Taylor. On Thursday, April twenty-seventh, he wrote to Clare: [1]

> "I have got all Keats's MSS. in my hands now to make a Selection out of them for another volume, as I did of yours, and I should like to write an Introduction too, as Editor, to speak about the unfair Reception he has met with from the critics, & especially from the Quarterly Review; but perhaps I had better not."

As April drew to a close, Keats's annual difficulty presented itself as a sinister horror. Brown would let his house for the Summer, as usual, and Keats must find somewhere to go. That Brown should have considered leaving him in the state he was in, particularly when leaving him meant turning him out of house and home as well, speaks

[1] *New Sidelights on Keats, Lamb, and Others. From Letters to J. Clare,* by Edmund Blunden. *The London Mercury,* June, 1921.

not too well for Brown. Ignorance of the true condition of affairs cannot be urged in extenuation of his behaviour, for if any man knew the complete facts, Brown was that man. The callousness of his action needs no emphasizing; it is patent. The motives which actuated him, little as he may have liked to admit them to himself, seem to have been two. The first was that he was heartily tired of the post of sick nurse, and longed to stretch his legs and his lungs by going on another walking trip to Scotland. In short, he wanted to shake the dust of illness from his mind, and be foot-loose and free to do what he pleased. Also, he was expecting Abigail Donohue to bear him a child early in July,[1] and he may have thought it wiser not to be near Keats when that event took place, for fear of receiving an announcement of it, or having to repair suddenly to Ireland. Not that he had any intention of doing so, but it was conceivable that the necessity might arise. Perhaps it did; we know nothing of his movements that Summer.

Brown's second motive was, I fear, purely financial. The arrangements between him and Keats, according to George,[2] were that they should share the expenses of housekeeping. Keats may have paid off the debt he had contracted the year before with the first hundred pounds drawn from Tom's estate, but we know from George that he had other debts to discharge, which debts, according to Taylor,[3] amounted to eighty pounds all told, exclusive of the debt to Taylor himself. When George left to return to America, John had his second hundred pounds, and what-

[1] So the unpublished Memoir by his son says, but from what we know of Brown's doings the Autumn before, it would seem that the date should be June. Under the circumstances, Major Charles Brown may not have known exactly when he was born, or the manuscript may have suffered a copyist's error. From Brown's leaving Wentworth Place a month earlier than was his wont, I am strongly inclined to believe that the date was really June.

[2] Letter to Dilke. Author's Collection.

[3] Unpublished letter from Taylor to his cousin, Michael Drury. February 19, 1821. Author's Collection.

ever, if anything, was left of his first hundred. A meagre amount to meet the expenses of a Winter, to say nothing of the Summer following, for George can hardly have expected to get any return on his money short of a year at least. George told Dilke in 1830 that, when he left London in 1820, a certain sum was due Brown, but that John had the money to pay it, and he believed did pay it. Now what seems most likely is that John could pay it, but, if he did, would simply have been obliged to borrow again, and under the circumstances the debt, or a part of it, was let stand. Certain it is that, after Keats's death, Brown sent in a bill to Abbey of seventy pounds for money owed him by Keats, which bill George eventually discharged. Now the Winter had been a very expensive one, with doctors constantly in attendance, medicine to be bought, and Keats utterly powerless to work, even for the future. *Otho* had brought them in nothing, and Brown found himself considerably concerned about his affairs. Rent for the house would be a present help, and he could not resist so evident a relief.

It is but fair to Brown, however, to realize that he had already done a great deal for Keats, whose illness cannot have helped being a drag even on so buoyant a fellow as he. Keats's pathetic dependence upon him, while gratifying, must also have been wearying. The demands of friendship may be too great to meet, and Brown very likely felt that he needed a little vacation. His character, although sturdy, was not of a very high type, which I think does him complete justice in a nutshell.

To have to move at this juncture was a most unfortunate thing for Keats. To hunt for lodgings took on the proportions of a nightmare, to go and live in them required a fortitude of which he hardly believed himself capable. His nervousness was pitiable. Foolish people, even doctors, suggested foolish things. Somebody advised him to give up poetry and take up the study of mathematics; somebody else — probably, this time, Dr. Bree — urged

Keats to make the voyage to Scotland in the smack with Brown and sail right back again, "for change of exercise and air."

After all, a rescuer was at hand in the person of Hunt, who was living at 13 Mortimer Terrace, Kentish Town, not far from Hampstead. Why not lodge near him, urged Hunt, where, at least, he would be close to friends who could keep an eye on him. It was not a happy solution, the obvious one was his old lodging at Well Walk. But the objection which Keats had felt to that the year before still held good. So Kentish Town was decided upon, and Keats found rooms which would do at 2 Wesleyan Place, and moved into them on either May fifth or sixth.

At first, Keats seems to have really entertained the idea of going up to Scotland in the smack with Brown. He speaks of it as a settled thing to his sister in a letter written on the twenty-first of April. But before the time of departure came, he found he could not make the effort. He did, however, run down as far as Gravesend with Brown, where the friends bade each other good-bye. It was the last time they were ever to see each other, which, fortunately, neither of them in the least foresaw. At Gravesend, Keats left the smack and returned to London. Brown says that the smack sailed from London on May seventh, which was a Sunday, and he ought to know. But Keats evidently expected him to sail on Saturday. In another letter to his sister, written from Wentworth Place on Thursday, May fourth, he says: "Mr. Brown goes on Saturday." As Sunday seems rather an odd day for a boat to sail, I think it possible that Brown confused the dates of his leaving London and his sailing from Gravesend, and that the right date for the London departure should be Saturday, May sixth. Nevertheless it is also quite possible that the smack expected to sail on Saturday, but was delayed until Sunday.

Keats's moving into the Kentish Town lodgings on Fri-

day or Saturday was, without doubt, merely nominal. He probably moved his belongings in, but stayed at Brown's until the last minute. On his return, he went directly to Wesleyan Place, where he seems to have found waiting for him a bunch of flowers from Miss Brawne, sent, obviously, to give his new rooms a home touch. Hunt, too, must have come round immediately to see him and cheer him up. Since sailing vessels were dependent on wind and tide, it is quite probable that Keats spent a night with Brown on board the smack. It was only three and a half hours from Gravesend to London by coach, so that Keats was undoubtedly returned by Monday night at the latest. The sail had done him good. He came back fully determined to make the best of a bad business and get through the Summer with as little friction between himself and himself as possible. An undated letter, which appears to be his first from Kentish Town to Fanny Brawne, shows his mood:

> "My Dearest Girl,
>
> I endeavour to make myself as patient as possible. Hunt amuses me very kindly — besides I have your ring on my finger and your flowers on the table. I shall not expect to see you yet because it would be so much pain to part from you again. When the Books you want come you shall have them. I am very well this afternoon."

Keats was possessed of a strange obsession, without the realization of which it is impossible to understand him. This obsession can only be described as a sort of horror and foreboding which came upon him whenever he was removed a short distance from Fanny Brawne. He often suffered acutely when near her, as near as next door, but these sufferings were more or less spasmodic, and her close proximity kept them from going to any very great extreme. They remained sane, even when acute. Separations of some considerable distance, at least while Keats remained

tolerably well, had the curious effect of lessening his misery, particularly if they were prolonged. We have seen this happen, first at Chichester and Bedhampton, and finally at Winchester. Time and distance worked wonders with him while he was in reasonable health and when his exile was voluntary. What he could not endure were separations amounting to no more than a few miles of distance. A few miles seemed to drive him into an unreasoning frenzy. He saw nothing but their last parting, and seemed utterly unable to occupy himself with a coming meeting. The agony of departure completely obscured the joy of return. Every sort of nightmare took hold of him until he reached a state verging on delirium. As soon as he saw Fanny, tantalizing as her presence was, his abnormal tortures instantly gave way to normal ones, if they did not vanish utterly, as they were quite apt to do. Why he did not realize this, and always seek her when he felt himself getting out of hand, can only be explained by the fact that when the fit was on him his abnormality had reached such a pitch that it was quite out of his power to reason at all. Kentish Town was only a very little way from Hampstead; there was no reason whatever why the daily intercourse should be given up. It was Keats himself who interdicted it, and made of their occasional visits to each other events of huge import which he must nerve himself up to, and the necessary ends to which left colossal regrets. The thing was a phobia, a mild sort of madness, which was all the more shattering because of its hallucinatory character.

Keats had evidently made good resolutions as to his conduct in advance this year, but he comprehended himself on this score so little that here at the outset he lays the gunpowder train which is certain to blow him to bits before long. He tells Fanny Brawne that he shall not expect to see her for some time as he cannot bear the idea of another leave-taking.

A week later, he is still fairly balanced, for he sends her this note, dated merely "Tuesday Afternoon."

> "My dearest Fanny,
>
> For this Week past I have been employed in marking the most beautiful passages in Spenser, intending it for you, and comforting myself in being somehow occupied to give you however small a pleasure. It has lightened my time very much. I am much better. God bless you.
>
> Your affectionate
>
> J. Keats."

Not very effusive, we observe, he evidently feared to give himself a free rein, but calm and steady. In spite of his ban, Keats must have seen Fanny Brawne with considerable frequency during his first six weeks at Kentish Town, for during that interval we have only these two little notes to her and one long letter, and in the mood in which he was we may be quite sure that, had he not seen her often, there would have been more. How much Fanny Brawne valued this Spenser, we have already seen.[1] She cherished the volume for many years until it was unhappily lost on a journey to Germany.

Keats continued to improve a little. On Monday, May fifteenth, he told Brown:

> "You know I was very well in the Smack; I have continued much the same, and am well enough to extract much more pleasure than pain out of the summer, even though I should get no better."

Here Keats makes a joking allusion to a stanza of the *Cap and Bells* which Brown had suggested that he send as an evidence of improved health, for he had written nothing since his hæmorrhage, adding: "Let us hope I may send you more than one in my next."

Hunt's society was perhaps not the worst he could have

[1] See Vol. II, p. 134.

had under the circumstances. Hunt was light, easy, sympathetic, and, above all, cheerful. He seems to have got Keats to show him his recent manuscripts, and, on seeing what poems were not to be included in the new volume, promptly took two of them for his own new paper, the *Indicator*. One of these, *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, he printed in the number of Wednesday, May tenth. Keats insisted on its being anonymous, and the signature appended to it was "Caviar," a reference, of course, to Shakespeare's "caviar to the general." Hunt's bungling finger in the alterations the poem underwent before publication has already been referred to.[1]

Keats did not feel up to original composition yet, but he was not entirely idle. There were the proof sheets of the *Lamia* volume to attend to. The contents of the volume had been decided upon at Wentworth Place, and, on the whole, the choice had not been badly made. The three great stories, *Lamia*, *Isabella*, and the *Eve of St. Agnes* were a foregone conclusion, as were the *Odes*, the only one of which to be excluded was the *Ode on Indolence*. These poems gave the volume a certain tone which was neither helped nor hindered by adding to them *Fancy*, *Bards of Passion*, the *Lines on the Mermaid Tavern* and *Robin Hood*. The book concluded with the fragment of *Hyperion*. Posterity, had it had a voice in the matter, would unquestionably have struck out the middle section of short pieces in favour of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, *Meg Merrilies*, and the fragments of the *Ode to Maia* and the *Eve of St. Mark*. But posterity could not be heard from, and the taste of the time was well enough suited by the selection made. Sonnets and other short fugitive poems were, naturally, reserved for a later book.

Keats's wish to have the volume open with the *Eve of St. Agnes* had evidently been overruled, but it would seem that at some period in the discussions there was an idea of

[1] See Vol. II, p. 228.

putting *Hyperion* immediately after *Lamia*, which was abandoned. A title-page with it in that position is copied into Woodhouse's Commonplace Book.[1] Whether or not *Hyperion* should be printed at all appears to have been a moot question for some time. Keats was against it, but the fragment was greatly admired by Woodhouse. Taylor's and Hessey's opinions we do not know, but the Woodhouse Commonplace Book, from the transcripts in which the choice of poems was made, records a vote against *Hyperion*.[2] Whether the vote was unanimous, or whether Woodhouse made a dissenting minority, is not stated. (At least, I suppose from Buxton Forman's not mentioning it that it is not. I have not seen the Commonplace Book myself.) Woodhouse's admiration of the fragment was unbounded. In his notes upon it in his interleaved copy of *Endymion*,[3] from which I have already quoted,[4] he says:

> "The structure of the verse, as well as the subject are colossal. It has an air of calm grandeur about it which is indicative of true power. It is that in poetry which the Elgin & Egyptian marbles are in sculpture."

Holding such an opinion as this, Woodhouse could only have vetoed the inclusion of the poem on the ground that it was unfinished. Somebody was instrumental in causing the negative vote to be set aside, but, if it were not Woodhouse, it was probably not so much a particular person as the general consensus of opinion among Keats's friends working on his publishers, for everyone who had seen *Hyperion* agreed as to its merit.

A little note to Taylor, in which Keats complains that a printing-house change in his text in one of the proofs alters his meaning, is dated by Buxton Forman "11 June," why, I do not know. I own the original and it has no date. That Keats was in a hurry to get his correction in before it

[1] Owned by Sir Sidney Colvin. [2] Quoted by Buxton Forman. Complete Edition. [3] In the possession of Mr. W. van R. Whitall of New York. [4] See Vol. II, p. 226.

was too late, seems evident by his having sent it by hand, a fact deduced from the minute care with which the note is addressed — first, in the proper place, to "John Taylor Esq^r. Taylor and Hessey. Booksellers Etc. Fleet Street," and then, on the flap, as a guide to the messenger, "The first Booksellers on the left hand from St. Pauls, past Bridge Street, Black-friars."

Keats was not sanguine about the fate of his book. Some time in June, he wrote to Brown:

> "My book is coming out with very low hopes, though not spirits, on my part. This shall be my last trial; not succeeding, I shall try what I can do in the apothecary line."

In this letter, he tells Brown many things which show not only the temper he was in, but what he had been doing, and more doubtless were here, for there are several blanks in the letter. Brown was careful to edit what letters of Keats he gave to Lord Houghton, unhappily for us. One episode to which Keats refers is a call at someone's house (Brown has carefully deleted the name) where he did not make himself agreeable. With perfect candour, he writes:

> "The fact is I did behave badly; but it is to be attributed to my health, spirits, and the disadvantageous ground I stand on in society. I could go and accommodate matters if I were not too weary of the world . . . I foresee I shall know very few people in the course of a year or two. Men get such different habits that they become as oil and vinegar to one another."

The deleted name should, I think, be Dilke. Keats had been growing out of sympathy with Dilke for some time. Dilke's preoccupation with his young son frankly bored Keats, and the constant discussion of politics made him feel isolated and cold. Added to this was the fact that when Fanny Brawne went to town it was usually to the Dilkes' that she went.

It must have been about this time, or a little before, that Keats's good resolutions slipped their cables and sent him whirling down the stream of feverish passion. Loneliness and depression could no longer be gainsaid, and in their wake, as always with Keats at this period, came blind, torturing jealousy. In this state of mind, he unwisely wrote to Fanny Brawne instead of going at once to see her. The pitiableness of the letter must have been its excuse to Fanny, there could be no other. A delirious man is not responsible for his ravings, and that the effect of his illness was to make him at times delirious, nobody with a grain of medical sense can fail to see. Here is the letter:

"My dearest Girl,

I wrote a letter for you yesterday expecting to have seen your mother.[1] I shall be selfish enough to send it though I know it may give you a little pain, because I wish you to see how unhappy I am for love of you, and endeavour as much as I can to entice you to give up your whole heart to me whose whole existence hangs upon you. You could not step or move an eyelid but it would shoot to my heart — I am greedy of you. Do not think of anything but me. Do not live as if I was not existing. Do not forget me — But have I any right to say you forget me? Perhaps you think of me all day. Have I any right to wish you to be unhappy for me? You would forgive me for wishing it if you knew the extreme passion I have that you should love me — and for you to love me as I do you, you must think of no one but me, much less write that sentence. Yesterday and this morning I have been haunted with a sweet vision — I have seen you the whole time in your shepherdess dress. How my senses have ached at it! How my heart has been devoted to it! How my eyes have been full of tears at it! I[n]deed I think a real love is enough to occupy the widest heart. Your going to town alone when I heard of it was a shock to me — yet I expected it — *promise me you will not for some time till I get better.* Promise me this and fill the

[1] Buxton Forman was unable to identify this letter. I incline to think it was incorporated in this one.

paper full of the most endearing names. If you cannot do so with good will, do my love tell me — say what you think — confess if your heart is too much fasten'd on the world. Perhaps then I may see you at a greater distance, I may not be able to appropriate you so closely to myself. Were you to lose a favorite bird from the cage, how would your eyes ache after it as long as it was in sight; when out of sight you would recover a little. Perhaps if you would, if so it is, confess to me how many things are necessary to you besides me, I might be happier; by being less tantaliz'd. Well may you exclaim, how selfish, how cruel not to let me enjoy my youth! to wish me to be unhappy. You must be so if you love me. Upon my soul I can be contented with nothing else. If you would really what is call'd enjoy yourself at a Party — if you can smile in people's faces, and wish them to admire you *now* — you never have nor ever will love me. I see *life* in nothing but the certainty of your Love — convince me of it my sweetest. If I am not somehow convinced I shall die of agony. If we love we must not live as other men and women do — I cannot brook the wolfsbane of fashion and foppery and tattle — you must be mine to die upon the rack if I want you. I do not pretend to say that I have more feeling than my fellows, but I wish you seriously to look over my letters kind and unkind and consider whether the Person who wrote them can be able to endure much longer the agonies and uncertainties which you are so peculiarly made to create. My recovery of bodily health will be of no benefit to me if you are not mine when I am well. For God's sake save me — or tell me my passion is of too awful a nature for you. Again God bless you.

J. K.

No — my sweet Fanny — I am wrong — I do not wish you to be unhappy — and yet I do, I must while there is so sweet a Beauty — my loveliest, my darling! good bye! I kiss you — O the torments!"

Keats's senses were, as we know, infinitely more acute than most people's; when to his normal abnormality in

this respect was added the sting of sexual desire, goaded to a pathological degree by the nature of his disease, he could no more master himself than he could fly. No wonder the world was dust in his mouth and contact with his kind a burning nausea. These were all symptoms, a fact which we must never lose sight of in thinking of the last few months of Keats's life.

Yet he did his best to "carry on." In the letter to Brown, quoted above, he speaks of going to an exhibition of old English portraits, which he managed to look at with sufficient interest to be able to describe a number of them. He also thinks of really starting to write again:

> "I shall soon begin upon 'Lucy Vaughan Lloyd.'[1] I do not begin composition yet, being willing, in case of a relapse, to have nothing to reproach myself with."

Another thing he mentions is being asked by someone (another deleted name) to supper to meet "Wordsworth, Southey, Lamb, Haydon, and some more," but he did not go. "I was too careful of my health to risk being out at night," is his ostensible and sufficient reason, but we may doubt whether he was much tempted.

The weather this month had been showery, and not conducive to either cheerfulness or well-being. Then, too, Fanny Keats was getting daily more restive and unhappy. Her relations with the Abbeys, never too comfortable, were approaching the stage of an open quarrel. Mrs. Abbey seems to have had a habit of nagging and complaining, and, worse than all, of throwing the blame of Fanny's fancied faults on family characteristics. Fanny Keats was a high-spirited girl, and her position was galling in the extreme. Just before Keats had left Wentworth Place, she had written to him of her inability to endure any more, and had begged him to do something to help her. But what could he do? Her seventeenth birthday was not until

[1] His projected *nom-de-plume* for the *Cap and Bells*. See Vol. II, p. 365.

June, and Abbey was her legal guardian, besides, his and his wife's offenses were not of a kind which would have removed her from his jurisdiction. Keats, ill as he was, was utterly at a loss. All he could do was to beg her to be patient, the situation could not last forever, and explain his own condition to her, assuring her at the same time that as soon as he was well enough he would do all in his power to aid her, but that in the meantime she must get along as best she could.

On Thursday, the twenty-second of June, Keats received a letter from his sister. What the letter contained, we can have no idea, but it appears to have asked him to go to town at once, either to see her or Abbey. Keats instantly prepared to go, but just as he was starting he was taken with a slight spitting of blood. This put an end to his going to town, but he did not go to bed, nor even, it appears, call in a doctor, and by the afternoon he was able to crawl round to Hunt's. He simply had to have some sort of companionship, he could not sit alone and think. We have a contemporary glimpse of this afternoon from Shelley's friend, Mrs. Gisborne, who wrote in her private journal on Friday, June twenty-third:

> [1] "Yesterday evening we drank tea at Mr. Hunt's... Mr. Keats was introduced to us the same evening; he had lately been ill also, and spoke but little; the Endymion was not mentioned, this person might not be its author; but on observing his countenance and his eyes I persuaded myself that he was the very person. We talked of music, and of Italian and English singing; I mentioned that Farinelli had the art of taking breath imperceptibly, while he continued to hold one single note, alternately swelling out and diminishing the power of his voice like waves. Keats observed that this must in some degree be painful to the hearer, as when a diver descends into the hidden depths of the sea you feel an apprehension lest he may never rise

[1] Quoted by Buxton Forman. Complete Edition.

again. These may not be his exact words as he spoke in a low tone."

Doubtless the idea of this feat gave Keats the feeling of suffocation he had experienced in his first hæmorrhage, and which seemed now once more an imminent possibility. Keats should have been at home and in bed, but can we wonder that he could not stay in his strange, unsympathetic lodgings and face this renewed discouragement alone? Yet going out was disastrous. On his return, he had another attack of blood-spitting and a doctor was called.

Keats's new physician was Dr. George Darling, a general practitioner who lived in Russell Square. Dr. Darling was Taylor's physician, and he had a large clientele among literary men and artists. Among his patients were Hazlitt, Clare, Wilkie, and Haydon, he was also a friend of Sir James Mackintosh. He belonged, in fact, to that little group which focussed to a considerable extent in the back parlour of Taylor and Hessey's shop. It was quite natural, therefore, that Keats should turn to him, particularly if he had lost confidence in the doctors who had looked after him before, as was very likely the case.

Dr. Darling was decidedly alarmed at the state in which he found Keats. Keats minimized his diagnosis to his sister, telling her that the doctor said he had nothing material to fear. Perhaps Dr. Darling had kept something back from Keats himself, but Hunt seems to have been thoroughly informed. At any rate, Hunt, although ill himself of a "bilious fever," at once begged Keats to give up his lodgings and move to Mortimer Terrace where he and his wife would nurse him to the best of their ability. It was a forlorn alternative from Keats's point of view. The Hunts, though kind, were feckless people, the house was full of children and the housekeeping often a riot of confusion. Yet Keats saw, and rightly, that he was far too ill to be alone, and on the next day, Friday, the move was

accomplished and Keats installed as an inmate of Hunt's house.

However lonely and haunted Keats had been at Wesleyan Place, it was bound to be far worse at Hunt's. There is no loneliness so great as that experienced in the midst of people, and no haunting comparable to thoughts incessantly present but entirely unshared by the other inmates of a house.

The move to Hunt's did not stop the hæmorrhages, as we see by a letter from Hessey to Clare,[1] written on Tuesday, June twenty-seventh:

> "You will be sorry to hear that poor Keats is very unwell. The sudden change in the weather has brought on a return of his old alarming complaint — & he has been spitting blood for several days. Dr. Darling expresses great Apprehensions for him."

Three days later, Hessey has no better news to report. On Friday, the thirtieth, he again writes to Clare:[2]

> "You will receive with this a copy of Keats's New Volume & you will perhaps read it with still more interest when you hear the Author is very unwell. A Blood Vessel in his Lungs broke last week and he has been under Dr. Darling's care ever since. By copious bleedings and active medicines the evil is at present reduced, but the prospect of its return & the evidence it affords of the state of his Constitution make me feel the greatest concern for him."

Keats's book was coming out in a few days, but he was too ill and too indifferent to be consulted in any way about it. This was particularly unfortunate as Taylor and Woodhouse had begun to be a little worried over *Hyperion*. Keats had not wanted the poem printed, and after all it was only a fragment, perhaps it needed an apology, or, at

[1] *New Sidelights on Keats, Lamb, and Others. From Letters to J. Clare*, by Edmund Blunden. *The London Mercury*. June, 1921.

[2] *Ibid.*

least, an explanation. The more they thought of it, the more they felt that it did. Taylor had adhered to his resolution not to write an Introduction, moreover he had gone to Bath "quite exhausted," nevertheless something must be done. In the end, either he in Bath, or Woodhouse in London, ventured to insert a brief note in the beginning of the book. This *Advertisement*, dated "Fleet Street, June 26, 1820," was a serious blunder. It was also, with no such intention, an impertinence, since Keats was not consulted about it. His opinion of it will be given in a moment, but to appreciate his annoyance one must know the *Advertisement* itself. I quote it therefore:

> "If any apology be thought necessary for the appearance of the unfinished poem of HYPERION, the publishers beg to state that they alone are responsible, as it was printed at their particular request, and contrary to the wish of the author. The poem was intended to be of equal length with ENDYMION, but the reception given to that work discouraged the author from proceeding."

The book was ready for distribution on Friday, June thirtieth, as we have seen, and I believe it to have been published on Monday, July third. Reynolds, writing to Taylor on Tuesday the fourth, says:

> [1] "Poor Keats! You cannot think how much pain Hessey's account has given me: — for if ever there was a worthy & clever fellow on Earth — he is that fellow. His book looks like an angel & talks like one too."

It seems from this as though Reynolds must have dropped in at 93 Fleet Street some time between Friday and Monday and found Hessey, who told him of Keats's attack, at the same time giving him the new volume.

Keats would have received his copies as soon as any were ready, and we can imagine his feelings when the *Advertisement* caught his eye. He, who was proud to a

[1] Unpublished letter in Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.

ADVERTISEMENT.

If any apology be thought necessary for the appearance of the unfinished poem of HYPERION, the publishers beg to state that they alone are responsible, as it was printed at their particular request, and contrary to the wish of the author. The poem was intended to have been of equal length with ENDYMION, but the reception given to that work discouraged the author from proceeding.

Fleet-Street, June 26, 1820.

PAGE OF A COPY OF "LAMIA" GIVEN BY KEATS TO B. DAVENPORT, ESQ.

Author's Collection

fault where the public was concerned, must have felt the reading of these few ill-advised lines like the pouring of vinegar into an open wound. That illness had not broken his fighting spirit is made abundantly clear by an inscription in a copy of the book[1] which he sent to Mr. Davenport, a Hampstead neighbour. In this copy, before the *Advertisement*, Keats wrote: "This is none of my doing. I was ill at the time," and at the end he put: "This is a lie."

Why Keats did not write this same denial in all his presentation copies, it is not easy to understand. But I have never seen it in any other, and I have examined not a few. For what reason Mr. Davenport was singled out as the recipient of this unique confidence, we shall never know. Probably some conversation not recorded was the cause. One would have supposed that Keats might have wanted Hazlitt to know the truth, but Hazlitt's copy[2] has on its fly-leaf only the pleasant and unimpassioned legend: "To W^m^ Hazlitt Esq^re^ with the Author's sincere respects." The inscription in the copy given to Fanny Brawne[3] is extraordinarily laconic. Keats could not bear to write anything personal in a book which might be seen by others. His secrecy where his love was concerned was carried to an alarming point, and it is the answer to Fanny Brawne's well-known, but quite misunderstood, remark to Dilke ten years after Keats's death, that "the kindest act would be to let him rest for ever in the obscurity to which circumstances have condemned him." Fanny Brawne was not referring to Keats's poetry when she wrote this, she was thinking of, and replying to, a request made to her by Brown in 1829. Brown was proposing to write a Life of Keats and had asked her to permit him to publish one of Keats's last letters to him which was almost entirely about her, although her name was not mentioned. Keats's letter will be given in the next chapter, and

[1] Author's Collection. [2] Day Collection. [3] Author's Collection.

my readers can judge whether any woman could have permitted such a letter to appear when she knew how agonizingly the author of it had begged her not to let any detail of their relations, even the bare fact of their mutual love, pass her lips. Well as she understood that Keats's extreme sensitiveness on the subject was the result of the morbidness due to disease, the injunction to her was sacred. She knew, as no one else did, how Keats had dreaded publicity, and in this remark (an answer, undoubtedly, to some farther suggestion of a biography) we see her protecting him even after death. The expression of her feeling was unfortunate, certainly, but that it was misleading was exactly what Keats would have wished. She had read his letters to her; Dilke had not. It need not surprise us, then, that all he wrote in her copy of the *Lamia* volume was, in his most careful hand: "F. B. from J. K." The book, however, is full bound in diamond-tooled calf, a habit of Keats's with very special copies of his various works.

In the beginning, Taylor and Hessey seem to have had some idea of printing the poems in the *Lamia* volume as separate books or pamphlets. On the back of one of the pages of a manuscript of Lamia,[1] a manuscript in Keats's handwriting, is a faint pencil memorandum (not by Keats) to this effect:

"Isabella 500 32
Lamia 600 35
St. Agnes 500 29

This day are published in 8 vo. form 3 shillings each Five Poems:

1 Isabella
2 Lamia
3 St. Agnes
4 Poems, Miscellaneous
5 Hyperion, a fragment.

The whole in 1 Vol. 8vo., price 12 & 6."

[1] Bemis Collection.

LAMIA,

ISABELLA,

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY JOHN KEATS,

AUTHOR OF ENDYMION.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR TAYLOR AND HESSEY,
FLEET-STREET.
1820.

TITLE-PAGE OF THE COPY OF "LAMIA" GIVEN BY KEATS TO FANNY BRAWNE
Author's Collection

The *Lamia* volume, when it appeared, sold for seven shillings and sixpence; the separate pamphlets were, it is evident, abandoned altogether, but one would like to know why they were ever contemplated.

Taylor's enthusiasm for his new publication was unbounded. Woodhouse had succeeded in inoculating his friend with much of his own belief in Keats's genius. Writing to a relative just before the appearance of the volume, Taylor speaks his mind about both it and its author in no unmeasured terms:

> [1] "Next week Keats's new Volume of Poems will be published, and if it does not sell well, I think nothing will ever sell well again. I am sure of this, that for Poetic Genius there is not his equal living, and I would compare him against anyone with either Milton or Shakespeare for Beauties."

Hessey was equally pleased with the firm's latest venture. He had spoken of it in both of his letters to Clare, in the first telling him:

> "For my part, I think no single volume of Poems ever gave me more real delight on the whole than I have received from this."

And in the second:

> "I think the simplicity of Isabella will please you much — Hyperion is full of the most sublime poetical images, & the small Poems delight me very much."

Keats was certainly lucky to have such men as Taylor and Hessey for his publishers, particularly when we add to them the firm's running mate, Richard Woodhouse. I am, indeed, prepared to say that, notwithstanding the less close intimacy of their relation, Woodhouse was the most uniformly worthy and disinterested of all Keats's friends.

[1] Quoted in Sir Sidney Colvin's *Life of Keats*, from information supplied by a great-niece of Taylor's.

His tact and generosity cannot be too strongly insisted upon, but not until the discovery of a number of his letters in the manuscript volume I have called the *Woodhouse Book* in the Morgan Library did we know their full extent. Woodhouse seems to have imbued at least one of his sisters with his own feeling for Keats's poetry, if we may judge by a letter[1] from her to her brother in which she speaks of "that beautiful and grand Sonnet to the 'Sea.'" She must have read the poem in a transcript made by Woodhouse, since it was unpublished. As soon as the *Lamia* volume was out, Woodhouse dispatched a copy of it to Taylor at Bath to give to her, or perhaps to another sister. The letter[2] to Taylor which mentions this copy was written from 93 Fleet Street, where Woodhouse was taking tea with Hessey, and at the end of it there is this pleasant piece of information:

> "Hessey has subscribed 160 of Keats — & sold *one Endymion* today. So that the bard's works begin to get in request."

This letter is dated simply "Friday," but I believe it to have been written on June thirtieth, and that the *Lamia* sent to Bath was one of the advance copies. The books subscribed by Hessey evidently referred to copies to be delivered on the following Monday, when the volume would be actually published and on sale.

We have seen that on Friday, June twenty-third, Keats moved over to Hunt's house. Hunt was making up the *Indicator* for the following week, and writing for it a paper entitled *A Now, Descriptive of a Hot Day*. Keats liked the paper, and, says Hunt:[3] "He was with me while I was writing and reading it to him, and contributed one or two of the passages." Several passages in this paper are very like Keats; of two of these I have so little doubt that I give them here:

[1] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography*.

"Now rooms with the sun upon them become intolerable; and the apothecary's apprentice, with a bitterness beyond aloes, thinks of the pond he used to bathe in at school . . .

[Of boys] Now also they make suckers of leather, and bathe all day long in rivers and ponds, and follow the fish into their cool corners, and say millions of 'MY eyes!' at 'tittle-bats.'"

It is quite characteristic of Keats to be able to do this sort of thing even when he was in reality depressed beyond measure. Besides, such reminiscences as this, such recalling of the pleasures of his boyhood, is on a par with his musings on the field flowers, confided to Rice a few months before.[1] This paper came out in the *Indicator* for June twenty-eighth, and in the same number Hunt printed Keats's *As Hermes once took to his feathers light*, again over the signature "Caviar."

By the second week of July, Dr. Darling seems to have decided that a more expert opinion than his was needed, that somebody who might be considered a specialist should be called in consultation. The physician summoned was Dr. William Lambe. Dr. Lambe was, like Dr. Bree, a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and he was also a most kind-hearted and generous man. Considered a bit of a fanatic, being a pronounced vegetarian, his practice was not large, so that he lived out of town, at the same time maintaining a consulting room at 2 Bedford (now Theobald's) Road, Bedford Row, where he saw patients three times a week. Why Dr. Bree was not sent for was probably because, in Keats's opinion, he had not been too successful in his treatment of the last attack, and also because Keats's exchequer was not in a condition to afford him. Dr. Lambe, on the other hand, often gave his services to people who had not the money to pay for them, and was, moreover, the author of a work on the *Cure of Constitutional Diseases*, with particular reference to scrof-

[1] See Vol. II, p. 395.

ula, consumption, cancer, and gout, a fact which gave him a strong recommendation.

Dr. Lambe recognized the seriousness of Keats's condition immediately and made no secret of his opinion. He was explicit in one thing. Keats could not survive another Winter in England, he must somehow contrive to go to Italy. This was a terrible decree, but Dr. Lambe would allow of no alternative. Truly, to Keats, it seemed as though horror after horror were being laid upon his head. Where turn, where look for any least brightness to lighten his gloom? Again we have recourse to Mrs. Gisborne, who has painted for us an unforgettable picture of Keats at this time. Once more I quote from her journal:

> "Wednesday 12 July. We drank tea at Mr. Hunt's; I was much pained by the sight of poor Keats, under sentence of death from Dr. Lamb. He never spoke and looks emaciated."

It seems to have been immediately after this that Mr. Gisborne wrote to Shelley his dismal account of Keats, which account induced Shelley to invite Keats to stay with him at Pisa. We shall reach this episode in due time.

The situation was desolate in the extreme, and Keats's rapidly increasing delirium, which he could still conceal from his friends, but not from Fanny Brawne, made it worse. The letters written to her from Hunt's house are simply the expression of a mortal agony. Keats finds cause for jealousy and torment in the most innocent visits. He forgets entirely the long weeks of her voluntary confinement at Wentworth Place, and fails to understand that now that she could not see him at all hours she must, if she would preserve her health and sanity, lead a normal life as far as possible. Doubtless her mother — who, nevertheless, loved Keats dearly, as he did her — encouraged Fanny to go about a little. Much as she loved Keats, Mrs. Brawne loved her daughter more, and she could not help seeing

that the engagement was a most unfortunate thing. For a girl not yet twenty to be engaged to a dying man is one of the profoundest tragedies which life can mete out. At the bottom of her heart, Mrs. Brawne must have hoped and prayed that something would happen to end the engagement; but Fanny had a determined will and she was very much in love, and Mrs. Brawne was powerless. She followed the course which her wisdom and comprehending affection dictated, she did nothing but what was kind as regarded both Keats and Fanny, and waited. We know her attitude from a letter[1] written by either Mr. or Mrs. Dilke to a correspondent whose name is not given:

> "It is quite a settled thing between John Keats and Miss Brawne — God help them. The mother says she cannot prevent it, and that her only hope is that it will go off. He don't like anyone to look at or speak to her."

For some reason or other, Keats did not see as much of Miss Brawne at Hunt's house as he had done when he was at Wesleyan Place. Probably it was his own idea to keep her away so that the Hunts should have no cause to remark upon the frequency of her visits. Mrs. Brawne came, however, as we see by the following letter. I shall give only extracts from these letters from Mortimer Terrace, they will tell us all we need to know. None of them are dated or postmarked; I suppose they were sent by hand. The order in which Buxton Forman places them is implicit in the letters themselves.

> "I am tormented day and night. They talk of my going to Italy. 'Tis certain I shall never recover if I am to be so long separate from you: yet with all this devotion to you I cannot persuade myself into any confidence of you. Past experience connected with the fact of my long separation from you gives me agonies which are scarcely to be talked of. When your mother comes I shall be very sudden and

[1] *Papers of a Critic*, by Charles Wentworth Dilke.

expert in asking her whether you have been to Mrs. Dilke's, for she might say no to make me easy. I am literally worn to death, which seems my only recourse. I cannot forget what has pass'd. What? nothing with a man of the world, but to me dreadful . . . When you were in the habit of flirting with Brown you would have left off, could your own heart have felt one half of one pang mine did. Brown is a good sort of Man — he did not know he was doing me to death by inches. I feel the effect of every one of those hours in my side now; and for that cause, though he has done me many services, though I know his love and friendship for me, though at this moment I should be without pence were it not for his assistance, I will never see or speak to him until we are both old men, if we are to be . . . You will call this madness. I have heard you say that it was not unpleasant to wait a few years — you have amusements — your mind is away — you have not brooded over one idea as I have, and how should you? . . . Any party, anything to fill up the day has been enough. How have you pass'd this month? Who have you smil'd with? All this may seem savage to you. You do not feel as I do — you do not know what it is to love — one day you may — your time is not come . . . I appeal to you by the blood of that Christ you believe in: Do not write to me if you have done anything this month which it would have pained me to have seen. You may have altered — if you have not — if you still behave in dancing rooms and other societies as I have seen you — I do not want to live — if you have done so I wish this coming night may be my last. I cannot live without you, and not only you but *chaste you; virtuous you*. The Sun rises and sets, the day passes, and you follow the bent of your inclination to a certain extent — you have no conception of the quantity of miserable feeling that passes through me in a day. — Be serious! Love is not a plaything — and again do not write unless you can do it with a crystal conscience. I would sooner die for want of you than —"

The insult in the last part of this letter is the one and only time in his life, as far as we know it, in which Keats's

taste, and his sense of chivalry, permitted him to do a really abominable thing. The ravings of delirium alone can be an excuse for it. The utter nonsense of it can have been its only palliative to Fanny Brawne. What she bore with in these letters cannot be overstated. Her pity must have been extreme to tolerate such selfishness and cruelty. But Fanny Brawne realized, as have too few of Keats's critics, that this was illness, illness so fevered and transforming that the man who suffered it was not responsible for what he said. If only we had some of her letters to him! He brooded and brooded over them until he read monstrous things into her simplest expression. That she may not have discovered how to temper herself to his comprehension, is quite possible. Another woman might have found the key. Perhaps, but I doubt it. Love, misery, and disease drove Keats temporarily mad, and the effect would have been the same whoever he had loved. And how many women would have, could have, stood such vituperation with Fanny Brawne's tenderness and sweetness? Yet even she seems to have resented this last letter a little, as we see by the next:

> "You complain of my illtreating you in word, thought and deed — I am sorry, — at times I feel bitterly sorry that I ever made you unhappy — my excuse is that those words have been wrung from me by the sharpness of my feelings. At all events and in any case I have been wrong; could I believe that I did it without any cause, I should be the most sincere of Penitents. I could give way to my repentant feelings now, I could recant all my suspicions, I could mingle with you heart and Soul though absent, were it not for some parts of your Letters. Do you suppose it possible I could ever leave you? You know what I think of myself and what of you. You know that I should feel how much it was my loss and how little yours. My friends laugh at you! I know some of them — when I know them all I shall never think of them again as friends or even acquaintance. My friends have behaved well to me in

every instance but one, and there they have become tattlers, and inquisitors into my conduct: spying upon a secret I would rather die than share it with any body's confidence. For this I cannot wish them well, I care not to see any of them again. If I am the Theme, I will not be the Friend of idle Gossips. Good gods what a shame it is our Loves should be so put into the microscope of a Coterie. Their laughs should not affect you (I may perhaps give you reasons some day for these laughs, for I suspect a few people to hate me well enough, *for reasons I know of*, who have pretended a great friendship for me) when in competition with one, who if he never should see you again would make you the Saint of his memory. These Laughers, who do not like you, who envy you for your Beauty, who would have God-bless'd me from you for ever: who were plying me with disencouragements with respect to you eternally. People are revengeful — do not mind them — do nothing but love me — if I knew that for certain life and health will in such event be a heaven, and death itself will be less painful. I long to believe in immortality. I shall never be able to bid you an entire farewell. If I am destined to be happy with you here — how short is the longest Life. I wish to believe in immortality — I wish to live with you for ever. Do not let my name ever pass between you and those laughers; if I have no other merit than the great Love for you, that were sufficient to keep me sacred and unmentioned in such society . . . Your name never passes my Lips — do not let mine pass yours. Those People do not like me. After reading my Letter you even then wish to see me. I am strong enough to walk over — but I dare not. I shall feel so much pain in parting with you again. My dearest love, I am afraid to see you; I am strong, but not strong enough to see you. Will my arm be ever round you again, and if so shall I be obliged to leave you again? My sweet Love! I am happy whilst I believe your first Letter. Let me be but certain that you are mine heart and soul, and I could die more happily than I could otherwise live."

What Keats had said about Brown was said in the petulance of agony. His mind was a prey to a phantasmagoria

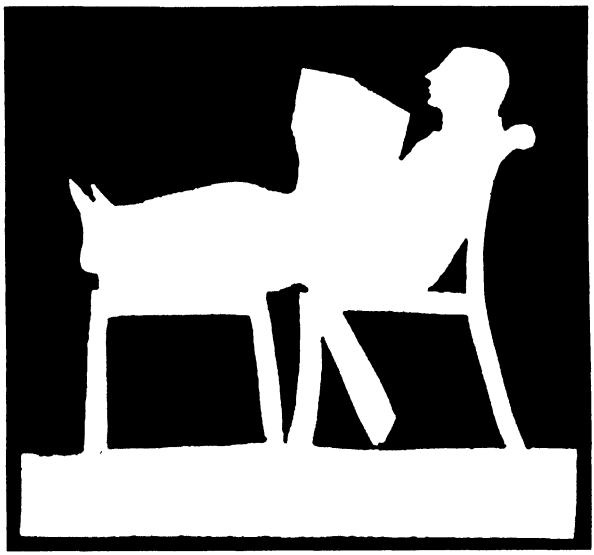
in which everything was distorted. He loved Brown at this period more than he loved anybody else except Fanny Brawne, and would have given the world to be back with him at Wentworth Place. What he says in this letter about the gossips, on the other hand, had more than a modicum of truth in it. Certain of his friends did not like Miss Brawne, and had done their best to pry him away from her. The Reynolds family seem to have been the chief aggressors in this, and particularly the Reynolds girls. In their case, there is little doubt that vanity played a considerable part in their attitude. Not that any one of the three was in love with Keats, but that they so evidently failed in interest for him after he met Fanny Brawne. To be sure, this interest had already begun to weaken before Keats met Miss Brawne, but they may not have realized that, and, even if they had, they resented the appearance of another woman who not only captivated him at once, but held him captive. It was not long after this time that Miss Reynolds wrote to Mrs. Dilke of Keats's going to Rome, and in her letter she said: "absence may probably weaken, if not break off, a connexion which has been a most unhappy one for him." Reynolds himself is more violent in expression, as we shall see later, but he was evidently less open on the subject to Keats, who cherished their old friendship to the end although he does not seem to have seen much of Reynolds this Summer, and he never wrote to him again. Reynolds's brilliant pugilistic joke, *The Fancy*, purporting to be by a certain "Peter Corcoran," appeared shortly before the *Lamia* volume. Keats must have read and liked it, if he had not already done so in manuscript, but we have no record of his opinion. One thing in this letter must not be overlooked: the absolute injunction to secrecy laid upon Fanny Brawne. How could she, after this, accede to Brown's request, or give her sanction to any biography of her lover, which would necessarily, even if anonymously, include her relation to him?

The third and last letter needs no comment:

> "I wish you could invent some means to make me at all happy without you. Every hour I am more and more concentrated in you; every thing else tastes like chaff in my Mouth. I feel it almost impossible to go to Italy — the fact is I cannot leave you, and shall never taste one minute's content until it pleases chance to let me live with you for good . . . Mr. Dilke came to see me yesterday, and gave me a very great deal more pain than pleasure. I shall never be able any more to endure the society of any of those who used to meet at Elm Cottage[1] and Wentworth Place. The last two years taste like brass upon my Palate. If I cannot live with you I will live alone. I do not think my health will improve much while I am separated from you. For all this I am averse to seeing you — I cannot bear flashes of light and return into my glooms again. I am not so unhappy now as I should be if I had seen you yesterday. To be happy with you seems such an impossibility! it requires a luckier Star than mine! it will never be . . . I am sickened at the brute world which you are smiling with. I hate men, and women more. I see nothing but thorns for the future — wherever I may be next winter, in Italy or nowhere, Brown will be living near you with his indecencies. I see no prospect of any rest. Suppose me in Rome — well, I should there see you as in a magic glass going to and from town at all hours,————————I wish you could infuse a little confidence of human nature into my heart. I cannot muster any — the world is too brutal for me — I am glad there is such a thing as the grave — I am sure I shall never have any rest till I get there. At any rate I will indulge myself by never seeing any more Dilke or Brown or any of their Friends. I wish I was either in your arms full of faith or that a Thunder bolt would strike me."

While this anguish of jealousy and despair was putting Keats to the torture day and night, he was acting with the

[1] Probably the house on Downshire Hill in which the Brawnes lived between their temporary occupancy of Wentworth Place in the Summer of 1818, and their permanent return to it in the early Spring of 1819.



SILHOUETTE OF KEATS BY MRS. LEIGH HUNT

From a photograph in the possession of Louis A. Holman, Esq.

utmost courage as far as his visible life went. Of that visible life, we have a little sketch in a letter to his sister:

> "Mr. Hunt does everything in his power to make the time pass as agreeably with me as possible. I read the greatest part of the day, and generally take two half hour walks a day up and down the terrace which is very much pester'd with cries, ballad singers, and street music."

As one reads this, one cannot help one's spleen rising, unjustly perhaps, against Brown who had bereft him of the quiet garden at Wentworth Place.

Another picture of this period has been given us by Mrs. Charles Cowden Clarke, who, before her marriage, was Mary Victoria Novello, the eldest daughter of the musical composer, Vincent Novello. Novello was an intimate friend of Leigh Hunt's, and the two families were on the most familiar terms. Miss Novello saw Keats at Mortimer Terrace, and many years later wrote of her inability to forget "the last time I saw him, half-reclining on some chairs that formed a couch for him when he was staying at Leigh Hunt's house, just before leaving England for Italy." Mrs. Hunt, who was considered very clever at cutting silhouettes, did one of Keats in this position, reading the paper, which brings him vividly before us. Although not a good likeness, the silhouette is a pathetic and important record of the seven weeks spent at Mortimer Terrace, when, he wrote to Brown later: "I was a prisoner at Hunt's, and used to keep my eyes fixed on Hampstead all day."

Keats seems to have become greatly altered by this time; Severn, who went to see him in the second week of July, was much disturbed at the way he looked, and wrote to Haslam:

> [1] "His appearance is shocking and now reminds me of poor Tom and I have been inclined to think him in the same way. For himself — he makes sure of it — and seems

[1] Colvin.

> prepossessed that he cannot recover — now I seem more than ever *not* to think so and I know you will agree with me when you see him — are you aware another volume of Poems was published last week — in which is 'Lovely Isabel — poor simple Isabel'? I have been delighted with this volume and think it will even please the million."

Severn was gentle, kind, and enthusiastic, but he was also shallow and incurably, baselessly, optimistic. It was characteristic of him to like the *Pot of Basil* — easily the poorest of the stories in the *Lamia* volume — so much as to single it out for mention.

Once only does Keats seem to have lost his control before Hunt. Hunt had taken him for a drive to Hampstead, and, most unwisely one would think, the friends got out of the carriage and sat for a while on a bench in Well Walk. Well Walk and its benches were so closely associated with Tom that Keats was entirely overcome. "He suddenly," says Hunt,[1] "turned upon me, his eyes swimming with tears, and told me he was dying of a broken heart." Hunt was startled, this was so unlike the Keats he had known; "he must have been wonderfully excited to make such a confession, for his spirit was lofty to a degree of pride," is Hunt's amazed comment made three years after the event. This side of Keats, Hunt had never seen before, and was only to see once again, in the wake of a most unpleasant occurrence.

On Thursday, August tenth, a letter from Fanny Brawne was delivered at Hunt's door. Keats had gone to his room to lie down, and Mrs. Hunt, being engaged with one of her numerous progeny, told the maid to take the letter to Keats. This the woman did not do. She was evidently on the eve of departure, for, on the next day, Friday, she left, and on Saturday Hunt's ten-year-old boy, Thornton, produced the note with the seal broken, at the same time telling his mother that the servant had given it to him

[1] *Wishing-Cap Papers*, by Leigh Hunt. 1823.

before she went with injunctions not to show it to his mother until the next day. Mrs. Gisborne relates the whole story in her journal, adding that the note "contained not a word of the least consequence," but that "Poor Keats was affected by this inconceivable circumstance beyond what can be imagined; he wept for several hours, and resolved, notwithstanding Hunt's entreaties, to leave the house; he went to Hampstead that same evening."

Mrs. Gisborne's lofty "not a word of the least consequence" rings jarringly enough across the very real tragedy that such a happening could not help being to Keats. It was a hideous shock which no amount of apologies nor reasoning could avert the consequences of. We know, as well as though we had been present, the almost demented state in which he must have arrived at the Brawnes', for, in his agitation, he seems to have gone directly to Wentworth Place. He had to see Fanny; but his intention was, after seeing her, to go at once to the Bentleys' in Well Walk and settle that night in his old rooms there. But here Mrs. Brawne showed her spirit, affection, and maternal instinct. She would not hear of Keats's leaving the house. He must, and should, stay right where he was, and she and Fanny would take care of him so long as he remained in England.

What the relief of this decision, taken entirely out of his hands, must have been to Keats, we can very well imagine. Under the same roof with Fanny again, but more, far more, within the same walls, shut in by the same front door! Fanny at night only a partition away, or, at most, only across an entry. Fanny there in the morning, all day, and the next night. The days in which he would know her every occupation; if she went out, where she went and why; on her return, whom she had seen, and then to hear her say how little she had cared for them. If, on his better days, she aroused his desire for her to an aching pitch, even that was easier than the same discomfort fed only by phantoms, with the tortures of suspicion added. No sus-

picion could survive their daily intercourse. Fanny, seen as an inmate of the same house could not help seeing her, proved to be just an attractive young girl, doing what all young girls do, and constantly ready to sit with him, talk to him, read to him, and love him as dearly and evidently as circumstances permitted. All that their engagement could sanction, Keats received; his quarrel henceforward was with fate, not with Fanny. The constant presence of Mrs. Brawne, too, was an inexpressible support. We know how sorely Keats had needed a mother. Mrs. Brawne began to assume that relation in his mind. The sick, tortured soul had found succour and healing at last. At last, but not to the last; Keats knew only too well that there was a term to this peace, that beyond the quiet walls of Wentworth Place lay Italy and exile, an exile which he could not even hope would end otherwise than with death. Recovery he believed to be impossible, and, without recovery, of what value was life to him? He had lost every vestige of religious belief, even the consoling doctrine of immortality, which had given him some small measure of comfort after Tom's death, had gone. There was nothing beyond, and the present was slowly seeping between his desperately clutching fingers like smooth, lapsing oil. No, in this haven of rest and security Keats could know no real rest nor security. His very happiness was unhappy with the tainted breath of change; yet, for all this, there was happiness. He told Severn afterwards that the most peaceful days he had ever known were those passed at the Brawnes'.

On Monday, August fourteenth, Keats felt well enough to attend to some of his correspondence. He wrote to his sister, acquainting her with his present whereabouts, and telling her the reason for his leaving the Hunts. As to his health, he is quite explicit:

> "I am excessively nervous: a person I am not quite used to entering the room half chokes me. 'Tis not yet Consumption I believe, but it would be were I to remain in this

climate all Winter: so I am thinking of either voyaging or travelling to Italy."

For news, he relates the following:

"Yesterday I received an invitation from Mr. Shelley, a gentleman residing at Pisa, to spend the Winter with him: if I go I must be away in a Month or even less. I am glad you like the Poems, you must hope with me that time and health will produce you some more. This is the first morning I have been able to sit to the paper and have many letters to write if I can manage them. God Bless you my dear Sister."

Shelley's letter has often been quoted, I will, then, merely say that Mr. Gisborne's account of Keats had left no doubt that Keats had consumption; we see, therefore, that Dr. Lambe had made this quite clear — if not as a fact, at least as a probability — to the Hunts, although he may not have spoken so plainly to Keats himself. Shelley's invitation was couched in just the right cheerful tone. Nothing could have been nicer or kinder than his attitude. Of *Endymion*, which he had had sent out to him from London by his publishers, having left the copy which Keats had given him[1] behind, he wrote:

[2] "I have lately read your 'Endymion' again, & ever with a new sense of the treasures of poetry it contains, though treasures poured forth with indistinct profusion. This people in general will not endure, & that is the cause of the comparatively few copies which have been sold. — I feel persuaded that you are capable of the greatest things, so you but will. I always tell Ollier to send you copies of my books. — 'Prometheus Unbound' I imagine you will receive nearly at the same time with this letter. 'The Cenci' I hope you have already received."

Keats's reply, try as he would, lacked both the ease and

[1] Bemis Collection.
[2] Corrected from the original letter. Author's Collection.

the courtesy of Shelley's letter. He neither distinctly accepted nor declined Shelley's invitation, and rather tactlessly offered some gratuitous advice on Shelley's manner of work. He was sensibly touched by Shelley's action, but Shelley as a poet was no more sympathetic to him than he had ever been.

"My dear Shelley,

I am very much gratified that you, in a foreign country, and with a mind almost overoccupied, should write to me in the strain of the letter beside me. If I do not take advantage of your invitation, it will be prevented by a circumstance I have very much at heart to prophesy. There is no doubt that an English winter would put an end to me, and do so in a lingering, hateful manner. Therefore, I must either voyage or journey to Italy, as a soldier marches up to a battery. My nerves at present are the worst part of me, yet they feel soothed that, come what extreme may, I shall not be destined to remain in one spot long enough to take a hatred of any four particular bedposts. I am glad you take any pleasure in my poor poem, which I would willingly take the trouble to unwrite, if possible, did I care so much as I have done about reputation. I received a copy of the *Cenci*, as from yourself, from Hunt. There is only one part of it I am judge of — the poetry and dramatic effect, which by many spirits now-a-days is considered the Mammon. A modern work, it is said, must have a purpose, which may be the God. An artist must serve Mammon; he must have 'self-concentration' — selfishness, perhaps. You, I am sure, will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity, and be more of an artist, and load every rift of your subject with ore. The thought of such discipline must fall like cold chains upon you, who perhaps never sat with your wings furled for six months together. And is not this extraordinary talk for the writer of *Endymion*, whose mind was like a pack of scattered cards? I am picked up and sorted to a pip. My imagination is a monastery, and I am its monk. I am in expectation of *Prometheus* every day. Could I have my own wish effected, you would have it still in manuscript,

or be but now putting an end to the second act. I remember you advising me not to publish my first blights, on Hampstead Heath. I am returning advice upon your hands. Most of the poems in the volume I send you have been written above two years, and would never have been published but for the hope of gain; so you see I am inclined enough to take your advice now. I must express once more my deep sense of your kindness, adding my sincere thanks and respects for Mrs. Shelley. In the hope of soon seeing you,

I remain most sincerely yours,
JOHN KEATS.

That any ulterior motive in a work of art acts as an alloy to the purity of the metal, Keats was well aware. An artist's chief loyalty is to his genius; his selfishness is a sacrifice made upon the altar of his dedication. In considering poetry its own ultimate, Keats was more purely an artist than Shelley, as he could not help knowing.

Another of the letters of this Monday was to Taylor. In it, Keats says:

"This journey to Italy wakes me at daylight every morning, and haunts me horribly. I shall endeavour to go, though it be with the sensation of marching up against a battery. The first step towards it is to know the expense of a journey and a year's residence, which if you will ascertain for me, and let me know early, you will greatly serve me. I have more to say but must desist, for every line I write increases the tightness of my chest, and I have many more to do. I am convinced this sort of thing does not continue for nothing. If you can come, with any of our friends, do."

The "many more letters" resolved themselves down to one little note to Haydon, at least we know of no others. Haydon had, some days before, asked Keats to return a copy of Chapman's *Homer* which Keats had borrowed. The book could not be found and, in the end, Keats was obliged to buy another. In this note, Keats refers to an

earlier one which seems not to have been preserved. Here he informs Haydon of the projected Italian journey, says his hopes and spirits are better, and adds: "I shall be here for a little time and at home all day and every day... Hoping to see you shortly," etc.

Haydon went, but the visit was far from a success. Haydon appears to have been in one of his most self-righteous moods, full of the consolations of religion and utterly obtuse to the fact that they were no consolations to Keats. Here is his account of the afternoon:

> "The last time I ever saw him was at Hampstead, lying in a white bed with a book, hectic and on his back, irritable at his weakness and wounded at the way he had been used. He seemed to be going out of life with a contempt for the world and no hopes of the other. I told him to be calm, but he muttered that if he did not soon get better he would destroy himself. I tried to reason against such violence, but it was no use; he grew angry, and I went away deeply affected."

It is a strange commentary on Haydon's exhortations that, in the end, it was he, not Keats, who died by his own hand.

On either this Monday, or on the next day, Tuesday, Keats wrote again to Taylor:

> "I do not think I mentioned anything of a Passage to Leghorn by Sea. Will you join that to your enquiries, and, if you can, give a peep at the Berth if the Vessel is in our river."

An enclosure in this letter proved to be Keats's will — a pathetic little document, for all he had to bequeath were a few books, a few fallacious hopes, and some debts. Taylor, careful, kindly, and punctilious, endorsed the letter as follows:

> "Inclosed in this Letter I received a Testamentary Paper in John Keats's Handwriting without date on which

I have endorsed a memorandum to this effect for the purpose of identifying it & for better security it is hereunto annexed.

JOHN TAYLOR.

22 Sept 1820."

The endorsement on the will is:

"N.B. on the 14th August or the 15th 1820 I received this paper which is in John Keats's Handwriting inclosed in the annexed Letter which came by the 3dy post.[1]

JOHN TAYLOR.

22 Sept 1820."

This is the will itself:

"My Chest of Books divide among my friends.

In case of my death this scrap of paper may be serviceable in your possession.

All my Estate real and personal consists in the hopes of the sale of books publish'd or unpublish'd. Now I wish *Brown* and you to be the first paid Creditors — the rest is nubibus — but in case it should shower pay my Taylor[2] the few pounds I owe him."

If others hoped for Keats, he dared not do so for himself. He was setting his house in order and facing the worst.

Yet, if Keats had been in the mood to be cheered by such things, there was at least the much better reception of his book than had fallen to the lot of either of his others to gratify him.

We have seen what Taylor and Hessey and Reynolds and Severn thought of the book. Here is the opinion of Mrs. Dilke, written to her father-in-law at Chichester:

[3] "I am anxious to know what success Keats' new poems have. I do not promise myself a great victory. If the public cry him up as a great poet, I will henceforth be their humble servant; if not, the devil take the public."

[1] Threepenny post.
[2] Tailor. Not infrequently so spelt by Keats.
[3] *Papers of a Critic*, by Charles Wentworth Dilke.

Review writers are hardly "the public"; they are more, and less. Keats was fortunate in his earliest reviewer, and would have been more fortunate still if Charles Lamb, for it was no other, had not seen fit to publish his critique in the *New Times* anonymously. Lamb was by way of liking Keats as a poet, he even considered him as "next to Wordsworth"[1] among modern poets, a great deal for Lamb. Lamb began his review by quoting four stanzas from the *Eve of St. Agnes*, those in which Madeline kneels beneath the stained glass window and afterwards undresses, saying of them:

> "Like the radiance, which comes from those old windows upon the limbs and garments of the damsel, is the almost Chaucer-like painting, with which this poet illumes every subject he touches. We have scarcely anything like it in modern description. It brings us back to ancient days and 'Beauty making-beautiful old rhymes.'"

But, to Lamb, the "finest thing" in the volume was the *Pot of Basil*, which he greatly preferred to *Lamia*. This latter poem he declared to be "of as gorgeous stuff as ever romance was composed of," and said that it did "all that fairy land can do for us," but for him "an ounce of feeling is worth a pound of fancy," and he returned "with a warmer gratitude, to the story of Isabella and the pot of basil." *Hyperion* he did not mention, which was odd, for it was precisely *Hyperion* which won most suffrages on the book's appearance.

Lamb's criticism was published within a fortnight after the publication of the book, which made it especially valuable.

In July, also, the old, established *Monthly Review*, which had not noticed *Endymion*, published a review of the new volume. The *Monthly* critic blew both hot and cold; he praised Keats for his originality, but adjured him "to be-

[1] Crabbe Robinson's Diary.

come less strikingly original." He exalted *Hyperion* as the best poem in the book, and damned the *Pot of Basil* as the worst; but he quoted the ode *To Autumn* in full, and ended by announcing that the author's "writings present us with so many fine and striking ideas . . . that we shall always read his poems with much pleasure."

Hunt followed this by two reviews in the *Indicator* for the second and ninth of August. In order to fit his criticism into what we should now call a "column," but which Hunt speaks of as a "miscellany," Hunt told the stories of the *Eve of St. Agnes*, *Lamia*, the *Pot of Basil*, and *Hyperion*, interpolating into his narratives certain quotations from these poems. He also quoted entire the *Ode to a Nightingale*, as a comment to which he wrote: "The imagination of Mr. Keats betakes itself, like the wind, 'where it listeth,' and is as truly there, as if his feet could follow it." *Hyperion* was "a fragment, — a gigantic one, like a ruin in the desart, or the bones of a mastodon." Hunt's remarks on *Lamia* and the *Pot of Basil* were slight and unimportant, and his criticism of the *Eve of St. Agnes* not so good as that published many years later in *Imagination and Fancy*, but his summing up of the volume was, on the whole, excellent:

> "The author's versification is now perfected, the exuberances of his imagination restrained, and a calm power, the surest and loftiest of all power, takes place of the impatient workings of the younger god within him. The character of his genius is that of energy and voluptuousness, each able at will to take leave of the other, and possessing, in their union, a high feeling of humanity not common to the best authors who can less combine them. Mr. Keats undoubtedly takes his seat with the oldest and best of our living poets."

Hunt had done well, but, whatever Hunt might say, his opinion was discounted in advance by his enemies and presupposed by his friends; his assistance to Keats was, therefore, negligible. Far otherwise was it with the *Edinburgh*

Review, which had maintained so stiff a silence in regard to *Endymion*. Jeffrey, the editor, was conservative in his tastes, but a pronounced enemy of the *Quarterly Review*. Why he had so long delayed to speak — a delay which Keats imputed to "cowardice" and which, he had told George the preceding September, "is more than the abuse of the Quarterly" — we can only conjecture; why he spoke at last is equally to seek. Perhaps, as Sir Sidney Colvin suggests, influential Whigs like Sir James Mackintosh had given him a hint to break silence. Whatever the reason, Jeffrey wrote a long article on both *Endymion* and the *Lamia* volume in the August number of the *Review*. He spoke of both books as "flushed all over with the rich lights of fancy," and said of *Endymion*: "We are very much inclined indeed to add, that we do not know any book which we would sooner employ as a test to ascertain whether any one had in him a native relish for poetry, and a genuine sensibility to its intrinsic charm." The review was long, and full of wise praise and sensible exceptions. Most of the paper was taken up with *Endymion*, but a short notice of the later volume contained quotations from *To Autumn*, *Fancy*, and the *Pot of Basil*, which last poem won from Jeffrey the epithet "deep pathos" applied to some of the stanzas. He did not advise the completion of *Hyperion*.

This was all good, but the sale was not brilliant. If Keats had had an ounce of envy or jealousy in his composition, the contrast between his own experience and that of the young peasant poet, John Clare, would have been a red hot iron to him. Clare was a recent discovery of Taylor's, who had brought out his first book, *Poems, Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery*, the Winter before with enormous success. It had leaped into the public favour at once, and been extravagantly praised by Keats's old enemy, the *Quarterly*. But not one syllable of all this do we hear from Keats, not a word of annoyance does he let fall, and I

think he felt none. His measurement of success did not entail comparisons with contemporary poets. Writing to Brown toward the end of the Summer, Keats remarks: "My book has had good success with the literary people, and I believe has a moderate sale." Shortly afterwards, he wrote again: "The sale of my book is very slow, though it has been highly rated." Taylor, a little discouraged, speaking of the poems to a correspondent, admits:[1] "They do not sell *very* well, but I rather think the Edinburgh Review will give them a lift." He is more explicit in a letter of the fourteenth of August to John Clare:[2]

> "We have some trouble to get through 500 copies of his work, though it is highly spoken of in the periodical works."

Taylor goes on to say that the old *Quarterly* attack, imputing to Keats a certain political bias, is what most stands in his way, at the thought of which the fiery publisher bursts out: "Damn them (I say) who could act in so cruel a way to a young man of undoubted Genius."

Taylor was a strong and brave partisan, who spoke his mind without regard to his pocket. How ably and sternly he could stand up for a principle and a friend, a letter to Hessey,[3] now in his turn gone on a vacation, shows:

"London 31 August 1820.

MY DEAR HESSEY,

I have had this Day a call from Mr. Blackwood. We shook Hands & went into the Back Shop. After asking him what was new at Edinburgh, and talking about Clare, the *Magazine*, Baldwins, Peter Corcoran, & a few other Subjects, I observed that we had published another Volume of Keats's poems on which his Editors would have another opportunity of being witty at his Expense. He said they were disposed to speak favourably of Mr K this Time —

[1] Quoted by Sir Sidney Colvin.

[2] *New Sidelights on Keats, Lamb, and Others. From Letters to J. Clare*, by Edmund Blunden. *The London Mercury*. June, 1921.

[3] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection. The original lacks quotation marks, which, for greater clarity, I have added.

and he expected that the article would have appeared in this Month's Mag. 'But can they be so inconsistent?' 'There is no Inconsistency in praising him if they think he deserves it.' 'After what has been said of his Talents I should think it very inconsistent.' 'Certainly they found fault with his former Poems, but that was because they thought they deserved it.' 'But why did they attack him personally?' 'They did not do so.' 'No? Did they not speak of him in ridicule as Johnny Keats, describe his Appearance while addressing a Sonnet to Ailsa Crag, and compare him as a Friesland Hen to Shelley as a Bird of Paradise; besides what can you say to that coldblooded Passage where they say they will take care he shall never get 50£ again for a vol. of his Poems — what had he done to cause such attacks as these?' 'Oh it was all a Joke, the writer meant nothing more than to be witty. He certainly thought there was much Affectation in his Poetry, and he expressed his opinion only. It was done in the fair spirit of Criticism.' 'It was done in the Spirit of the Devil, Mr. Blackwood. So if a young man is guilty of Affectation while he is walking the Streets, it is fair in another Person because he dislikes it to come and knock him down.' 'No,' says B. 'but a Poet challenges public opinion by printing his Book; but I suppose you would have them not criticized at all?' 'I certainly think they are punished enough by neglect & by the failure of their Hopes and to me it seems very cruel to abuse a man merely because he cannot give us as much pleasure as he wishes. But you go even beyond that, you strike a man when he is down. He gets a violent blow from the Quarterly & then you begin.' 'I beg your pardon' says B. 'we were the first.' 'I think not but if you were the first you continued it after, for that truly diabolical thrust about the 50£ appeared after the critique in the Quarterly.' 'You mistake that altogether' sd B. 'the writer does not like the cockney school, & so he went on joking Mr. K. about it.' 'Mr. Blackwood, Why should not the Manners of Gentlemen continue to regulate their conduct when they are writing of each other as much as when they are in conversation. No man would insult Mr. Keats in this Manner in his company, and what is the

Difference between writing & speaking of a poem except that the written Attack is the more base from being made anonymously & therefore at no personal Risk. I feel Regard for Mr. Keats as a man of real Genius, a gentleman, nay more as one of the gentlest of human Beings. He does not resent these things himself, he merely says of his opponents "They don't know me." Now this mildness makes those who are his Friends feel the more warmly, when they see him ill used. But this Feeling is not confined to them. I am happy to say that the public Interest is awakened to a Scorn of the Injustice which has been done him, and that the Attempts to ruin him will have in the End a contrary Effect.' Here I turned the Conversation to another Subject by asking B if he had read the Abbot, and in about 10 Minutes he made his Exit with a formal Bow & a good Morning.

The above is the Substance and as nearly as possible they are the words I made use of. His Replies were a little more copious than I have stated, but to the same Effect. I have written this Conversation down on the Day it took place because I suspect some allusion may hereafter be made to it in the Mag. and I fully expect that whatever Books we publish will be received with Reference to the feeling it is calculated to excite in the Bosoms of these mosstroopers . . .

I am perfectly sure he will never call on me again."

As a matter of fact, *Blackwood's* never reviewed the *Lamia* volume at all. The nearest approach to it was a quasi-apology, quasi-snarl, interpolated in a review of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* printed in the number for September. But, in the same number, a scurrilous rhymed jibe at the "Cockney School" contains this refined allusion to the book:

"We, from the hands of a cockney apothecary,
Brought off this pestle, with which he was capering,
Swearing and swaggering, rhyming and vapouring;
Seized with a fit of poetical fury,

.

Loud he exclaimed, 'Behold here's my truncheon;

I'm the Marshal of poets — I'll flatten your nuncheon.
Pitch physic to hell, you rascals, for damn ye, a —
I'll physic you all with a clyster of Lamia.'"

To this morsel of admirable wit was appended a note to make it quite clear that "Johnny Keats" was the aforesaid apothecary.

It is very possible that Keats never saw this number of *Blackwood's*, reviews in those days were far from punctual to their dates. And he may never have seen two other September reviews, the *British Critic* and the *Eclectic Review*. The first of these could "not approve of the morality of the principal poems," but admitted that there was "nothing in the details" of them which "would appear calculated to wound delicacy," and it did pronounce the author "a person of no ordinary genius." The *Eclectic Review* fell foul the *Advertisement*, which it positively gloated over, choosing to consider it as a sign of recantation on the part of the poet. The *Eclectic Review* was the organ of "protestant dissenters, of various denominations";[1] it need not surprise us, therefore, to find it hoping fervently that, but doubting very sincerely if, the author were a Christian.

One more criticism appeared in September, in Colburn's *New Monthly Magazine*, edited by Thomas Campbell. The *New Monthly* was all praise, from the first paragraph, which declared that

> "These poems are very far superior to any which their author has previously committed to the press. They have nothing showy, or extravagant, or eccentric about them; but are pieces of calm beauty, or of lone and self-supported grandeur. There is a fine freedom of touch about them, like that which is manifest in the old marbles,"

to the last, in which it is prophesied of "Mr. Keats" that

> "if he proceeds in the high and pure style which he has

[1] Leigh's *New Picture of London*. 1819.

now chosen, he will attain an exalted and a lasting station among English poets."

For the individual poems, none of the short pieces were noticed, but *Lamia* was spoken of as "a mingling of Greek majesty with fairy luxuriance," the stanzas where Isabella digs up Lorenzo's head in the *Pot of Basil* were called "wildly intense," the *Eve of St. Agnes* was "a piece of consecrated fancy," while the description of the Titan's cave in *Hyperion* was crowned with the climax of the reviewer's epithets, being considered "in the sublimest style of Æschylus." Florid and indiscriminate as all this is, the review was in the right vein, and following, as it did, on the heels of Lamb, Hunt, and Jeffrey must have seemed to round out an almost unanimous chorus of praise.

Added to these public tributes, Keats received an unexpected accolade in the form of a letter[1] from a Scottish admirer, John Aitken, afterwards editor of *Constable's Miscellany*, but at this time teller in an East Lothian Bank. Aitken wrote in a strain of fulsome enthusiasm, begging Keats to come and make him a long stay, promising him quiet in which to work, "soothing affection," and a library "select and extensive." Yet for all his nonsensical expressions, it is quite obvious that Aitken's offer was sincere, and prompted by a real admiration. There is no evidence that Keats ever answered this letter, nor is it ever alluded to in his correspondence, but the letter itself was found among Taylor's papers.

Keats's last appearance in print during his lifetime was a singular one, also it was anonymous. Hunt, who bore no grudge at his friend's summary departure from his house, printed four stanzas and a half of the *Cap and Bells* in a paper on *Coaches* in the *Indicator* for August twenty-third. These are the stanzas in which Eban, the page, takes a hackney-coach to drive to the soothsayer Hum's house. Hunt announced that the poem from which the stanzas

[1] Unpublished letter. Author's Collection.

were taken was by "a very good poetess, of the name of Lucy V——L——." The passage was very pertinent to Hunt's article, but I fear the joke came too late to afford any amusement to Keats, who was, however, willing to indulge Hunt in it.

As the days went on, it became imperative to take some definite steps in regard to the proposed Italian journey. Keats wrote and asked Brown if he would go with him, directing his letter to where he supposed Brown would be at a given time, but no answer came back. Possibly Brown had gone to Ireland. The letter had certainly stated the facts imperatively enough when it said:

> "I ought to be off at the end of the week, as the cold winds begin to blow towards evening; — but I will wait till I have your answer to this. I am to be introduced, before I set out, to a Dr. Clark, a physician settled at Rome, who promises to befriend me in every way there."

Relief from jealousy, and the nursing of Mrs. and Miss Brawne, had been of infinite benefit to Keats. On Wednesday, August twenty-third, he wrote to his sister:

> "If I return well from Italy I will turn over a new leaf for you. I have been improving lately, and have very good hopes of 'turning a Neuk' and cheating the consumption."

Modern medical practice lays great stress on the importance of ease of mind and placidity of surroundings for tuberculous patients, but no such idea had entered the heads of practitioners in Keats's day. A patient must get out of England and go to a warmer climate, no matter what sort of a climate it was otherwise, and no matter what conditions faced him there. No regard for what he left was allowed to change this decision in the least. Loneliness, discomfort, exposure even, were as nothing to the benefit of being somewhere a degree or more South of England. In sending Keats out of England, the doctors simply pursued the regimen they had been following all along: that of so

reducing his powerfully resisting body that tuberculosis might have every chance to kill him as quickly as possible.

Many and long must have been the talks between the lovers, and between the lovers and the mother. Buxton Forman says, presumably on Severn's authority, that there was some question of an immediate marriage, but indeed we know that from Fanny Brawne herself, as I shall show later. Keats wished fervently that not only Fanny, but her mother as well, could go with him to Italy. Yet it was his chivalry even more than Mrs. Brawne's prudence which denied him the peace of marriage under the circumstances. Still, hoping against hope, cheating themselves in the light of a false dawn, Keats and Fanny made their impossible plans. Mrs. Brawne was to live with them when they married, which was to be just beyond the fatal journey to Italy. So Keats, refusing to sacrifice Fanny, pictured out a future which, in reality, he never believed in. All his petty selfishness in little things fades away before the spectacle of his immolation on the spear of his all-embracing chivalry. He denied himself life to spare her the intimate experience of death.

Years after, Fanny Brawne wrote to Medwin of Keats's last days in England, and her letter proves how well she had learnt to understand her lover:

> "That his sensibility was most acute, is true, and his passions were very strong, but not violent, if by that term, violence of temper is implied. His was no doubt susceptible, but his anger seemed rather to turn on himself than on others, and in moments of greatest irritation, it was only by a sort of savage despondency that he sometimes grieved and wounded his friends . . . For more than a twelvemonth before quitting England, I saw him every day, often witnessed his sufferings, both mental and bodily, and I do not hesitate to say that he never could have addressed an unkind expression, much less a violent one, to any human being. During the last few months before leaving his native country, his mind underwent a severe conflict; for

> whatever in moments of grief or disappointment he might say or think, his most ardent desire was to live to redeem his name from the obloquy cast upon it; nor was it till he knew his death was inevitable, that he eagerly wished to die . . . I believe that the fever which consumed him, might have brought on a temporary species of delirium, that made his friend Mr. Severn's task a painful one."

No one had experienced the "temporary species of delirium" so often or so bitterly as Fanny Brawne, and if, after what she had gone through, she could write in this way to Medwin, it is cruelty to question either her love or her comprehension.

Meanwhile no remittance came from George, and Keats was on the eve of a journey and utterly destitute of funds. Brown was away, there was only Taylor to turn to, and Taylor rose to the occasion — not perhaps entirely without an eye to future gain for the firm, if not in actual cash, at least in reputation. Taylor had an unshakable belief in Keats's genius, and was convinced that every assistance rendered him would in the end redound to his benefactors' credit. Basing his actions on this belief, Taylor promptly agreed to cancel all Keats's outstanding debts to his firm. He had, apparently, some time before, promised to take over the copyright of *Endymion* as an offset to the one hundred pounds advanced on that book; now he proposed to take over the copyright of the *Lamia* volume in the same manner as part payment of what was due at the moment, and to this he added the sum of thirty pounds, making the payment for the *Lamia* also one hundred pounds. More than this, he gave Keats a letter-of-credit for one hundred and fifty pounds.[1] Taylor was one of the people who thought the whole seven hundred pounds that George had taken back to America belonged to John, and seems to have been fully persuaded that remittances from George would come before Keats's drafts from Italy would have to be honoured.

[1] Compiled from an unpublished letter from Taylor to his cousin, Michael Drury. February, 19, 1821. Author's Collection.

It is quite clear that he entirely misunderstood the situation, and that Keats, in his turn, failed to realize Taylor's point of view. We shall see the result of these mutual misunderstandings in the next chapter. Before Keats sailed, Taylor wrote him a letter.[1] It is endorsed "Not sent," and indeed is not quite accurate. He speaks of giving Keats fifty pounds, whereas later letters from him state the sum to have been thirty pounds. I quote this drafted letter in full, since, notwithstanding its one small inaccuracy, and its occasional blanks where figures are concerned, it is very illuminating as to Taylor's attitude and also speaks highly for his generosity and that of his partner Hessey. For, although Taylor promised more than he wished to perform in the matter of the letter-of-credit, nevertheless, so far as Keats himself was concerned, he was really generous.

"Fleet Street 11 Sept 1820.

My Dear Keats,

Before you go out of the country I am desirous of explaining to you on what Terms we conceive ourselves to be acting as your Publishers. — In few words we may state it thus. — Whatever we print we run the Risk of, and if it does not answer, the loss is ours: whatever succeeds we deem the Profit wholly yours; but if one work fails and leaves us a loss which the Profit on another would make up, we should consider ourselves entitled to be reimbursed that loss out of those Profits. — If all, or the Majority, do not repay the Expenses, then the loss is wholly ours. — On these Terms we are willing to go on publishing if you choose to write; we shall charge no Commission for our Trouble, meaning to derive no advantage; and we will render an account of the Sales whenever you please, to shew you in what state your Finances are —

I have put it in this light to make it plainer; but if we take the matter in another point of view it will amount to the same thing: consider then the Endymion ours, for the Copyright of which we gave 100£; and say that what we have already advanced to you in Cash since that Time,

[1] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.

viz £ is the Price of the Copyright of Lamia: now if we get anything beyond these sums by either of the Books, so as to have in our Hands on the whole more than we have given you, we will transmit that Surplus to you; and so on with every future work.

I make this explicit statement of what you would otherwise have discovered in due Time, to convince you that we have no selfish Ends to answer in encouraging you to write & publish; and also that you may correctly estimate the Means we have in our Hands of supplying you with money while you are abroad. — At present we are out of pocket 135£ on Endymion, but that may be reduced by future Sales if your other works succeed — Lamia has not yet repaid the Expenses, there is therefore the advance on that to be added, making together with the Books mentioned in the enclosed Bill £. — You shall have 50£ more to take you to Italy, and from thence you must draw for what you want, but I think you will not wish us to pay those Bills without placing some Money in our Hands for that purpose. If I were rich enough to do without the whole Sum that you might want I would gladly give it to you, but if I wanted it I know nobody who would let me have it.—

You will do well to publish again as soon as you have the power to produce anything, and the Success you may rely upon it will in every Instance increase. I hope yet to see you as rich and as renowned as you deserve to be. — Meantime wishing you a pleasant Voyage, perfect Health, and all Happiness, I remain,

My dear Keats
Your faithful Friend
JOHN TAYLOR"

That Keats left England with a credit of no more than one hundred and fifty pounds is proved by the following hitherto unpublished letter from the firm, Taylor and Hessey, to a certain "Brown Esq. Poultry,"[1] whoever he may have been — a relative of Charles Brown's perhaps, but certainly not he himself, for Charles Brown did not

[1] Copy in Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.

reach London until September eighteenth, also he had no corresponding business house at Naples.

"Fleet Street
19 Sept 1820

SIR

In compliance with the wish you expressed on Saturday last we write to inform you that we will honor the Bills of Mr. John Keats of Naples to the amount of one Hundred and Fifty pounds; and you will much oblige us by allowing and directing that those Bills should be negociated through the Medium of your House at Naples. Mr. Keats sailed on Sunday last in the Maria Crowther.

We are Yrs try
T & H"

Taylor had not only bestirred himself in the matter of money, he had found a vessel due to sail for Naples in the middle of September. This was the "Maria Crowther," a small brig.[1] She had been built in 1810, for the Bristol, Liverpool and Holyhead trade, and is listed as one of the regular trading ships in that trade in Stewart's *Gentleman's and Citizen's Almanack* for 1816. She had lately changed captains, and probably owners, as well as route.

All was arranged, but still Brown had not been heard from, and Keats faced the possibility of making the voyage, and living in Italy, alone. There seemed no one in a position to go with him, when suddenly Haslam thought of Severn. Severn was as poor as a church mouse (although, as a matter of fact, less destitute than Keats), and he was not getting on any too well as regarded his financial prospects in England. Haslam went round to see him one evening to suggest that he pick up stakes and go to Rome with Keats. Rome, in those days, was the artist's Mecca, every artist wanted to get there, and many who won scholarships did. Haslam's proposal was not quite so crazy as it sounds,

[1] Not a brigantine, as is usually stated. Severn's picture of the vessel in the *Keats Memorial Volume* makes her rig quite clear.

for embedded in it was the very practical idea that, while in Rome, subject to her artistic influences and in touch with her resident painters, Severn, who had won the Royal Academy's gold medal the previous Winter with his *Cave of Despair*, should paint a picture and submit it for that society's travelling scholarship, which, if he won it, would enable him to stay in Rome for future study. His getting the scholarship was the merest chance, of course, but without such a chance it would have been utter folly for Severn to have considered the journey, no matter how strongly importuned by his old affection and admiration for Keats to do so. Haslam's call took place only a few days before the time when the "Maria Crowther" was expected to sail. In one set of reminiscences, Severn says he had three or four days to get ready; in another, he declares that he started the very next morning. Since he had time to call on Sir Thomas Lawrence and obtain an introduction to Canova, and to collect from a lady twenty-five pounds owing him for a miniature, it seems likely that some days at least intervened between his acceptance of Haslam's proposal and the putting of it into effect. At any rate, it was all very quickly done, and Keats had secured a companion, if not by any means the one he would have chosen. It was agreed that the travellers should meet at the dock. Severn had a hard time to get away. His father was violently opposed to his going; but go he did, with the twenty-five pounds miniature money as his sole travelling expense fund.

It had been decided that Keats should move in town to Taylor's house, 91 New Bond Street, a few days before the expected time of departure, in order to be on hand when the "Maria Crowther" should actually sail. When he went, no letter nor account yet discovered states. In a copy of Hunt's *Literary Pocket Book* for 1819, which Keats had given her, under the date of September eighth, Miss Brawne wrote: "Mr. Keats left Hampstead." On the

eighth of September, 1819, Keats was at Winchester. But September eighth, 1820, was a Friday, and Keats did not sail until a week from the following Sunday. It seems most unlikely, therefore, that he should have gone to Taylor's so long in advance. No amount of juggling with possibilities of confusion between the calendars of the two years yields anything like a clue, and we must resign ourselves to ignorance of the day on which Keats left Wentworth Place.[1] But it was undoubtedly there that he and Fanny Brawne bade each other good-bye. Each of them knew it was forever. She tried to hope; he knew too well that there was no hope. His last months were spent in trying to wean himself from the world, for to hope against what his reason knew would come was too great a torture. From the moment that the sight of Fanny Brawne disappeared from his eyes, from that moment, Keats entered on his final agony, an agony without respite till the end. His "posthumous life," as he called it later, began then, and in watching the anguish of the next five months, in trying to comprehend his attitude during them, we must never forget that in his own mind he was a dead man from that very instant. His behaviour, baffling as much of it seems, can only be understood by constantly remembering this.

For a day or two, Keats remained at Taylor's, and just before he left, Woodhouse wrote him a letter,[2] which seems to have been given him to read after he and Woodhouse had taken leave of each other. This letter was calculated to ease Keats's mind of the problem of what was to be done when his one hundred and fifty pounds were spent. It was a kindly thought on Woodhouse's part, and the straightforwardness of his expression could not have failed to inspire perfect confidence in his absolute sincerity:

[1] Sir Sidney Colvin states that he went to Taylor's on Wednesday, September thirteenth, but does not give his authority. Possibly I have missed some evidence which Sir Sidney has seen, I have certainly found none.

[2] Author's Collection.

"My Dear Keats,

Upon subjects like those in this letter, it is to me always more pleasant to write than to speak. — It gave me pleasure to learn from Taylor that you are leaving us tolerably easy as to money matters. — The more so, as, from particular circumstances, my own finances, have had, and for the next six months or so will have, considerable drains upon them; which would make it not very convenient to me just *now* to render you assistance in that way. — But when I am a little recruited, which will I hope be about the time I have above mentioned, if you should have any wants of that nature, it would give me the greatest satisfaction to answer your draft; & you would of course, to prevent any disappointments, give me as much previous notice as you could, — I am sure you would not needlessly call upon me: — and, with that conviction, I should be despicable in my own eyes, if, with the means, I wanted the will to assist you. — What is the value of Pelf after the supply of one's own wants? — Of none to me. And there is no one who would be more welcome than yourself to share my little superfluities. —

God bless you! — Take care of yourself, — if it be only for your friends' sake. Above all, keep your mind at ease. There are many who take more than a brotherly Interest in your welfare. There is certainly

'———— one, whose hand will never scant
From all his poor store of fruits all *thou* canst want.'

And he is

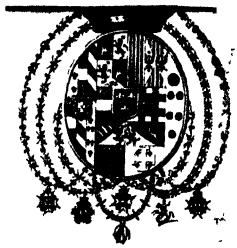
Yours very sincerely
& affectionately,
Richd Woodhouse.

Satv night. 16 Sep. 1820

Kings Bench Walk Temple"

On Saturday, also, Keats's passport[1] arrived. This most important document has only recently come to light. It is the usual official printed form, filled in with the requisite names. Beginning with the ambassador's name and his credentials from "His Majesty the King of the King-

[1] In the possession of Mr. Oliver R. Barrett of Chicago.



D. COSTANTINO GUGLIELMO DE LUDOLF,

Conte del Sagro Romano Impero, Commendatore dell' Ordine Sovrano di S. Giovanni di Gerusalemme,
Inviato Straordinario, e Ministro Plenipotenziario di SUA MAESTA' IL RE DEL REGNO DELLE DUE SICILIE presso SUA MAESTA IL RE DEL REGNO UNITO DELLA GRAN BRETAGNA ED IRLANDA.

Partend da questa Capitale per

Incarichiamo tutt'i Ministri di S. M e tutt'i Suoi Ufiziali Politici e Militari; e quelli delle Potenze Amiche ed Alleate preghiamo di non permettere che si faccia ostacolo alcuno, anzi si presti ogni favore necessario per eseguire il suo viaggio. *Londra li* 18



KEATS'S PASSPORT TO ITALY (FIRST PAGE)
From the original in the possession of Oliver R. Barrett, Esq.

dom of the Two Sicilies" to "His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland," the document continues:

> "Leaving this Capital for *Naples on the English Vessel Maria Crowther commanded by Captain Thomas Walsh is Mr. John Keats* British subject."

Here follows the charge to "all the Ministers of His Majesty and all his Political and Military Officials" to give any necessary aid to the traveller. The passport is dated "London, *16 September 1820*, and signed by the ambassador, "*C. G. de Ludolf.*"

In the bleak and rather chilly light of dawn on Sunday, September seventeenth, Keats and Taylor drove to the London Docks and went on board the "Maria Crowther." Here they found, or were shortly joined by, Severn and his brother Tom, Woodhouse, Haslam, and, according to Severn, other friends as well, but who they were can only be conjectured. Hunt says that he was there, but as he also states that Fanny Brawne and her mother were present, he may be romancing throughout, for that the Brawnes were not at the Docks, we have emphatic proof in an unpublished letter from Reynolds, an extract from which will be given in the next chapter. Reynolds himself was on his vacation in Devonshire, and Brown — where was Brown? Keats must have wondered about this very often and very miserably that morning while he forced himself to appear cheerful and determined. The passengers were to be, besides Keats and Severn, two ladies, but only one of them put in an appearance at the London Docks; the other, they were told, would join the vessel at Gravesend.

The tide turned at a quarter before eleven, and by that time all the well-wishers had gone ashore except Haslam and Woodhouse, who went to Gravesend with the voyagers. Taylor may have gone too, but of his doing so we have no record.

At Gravesend, before bidding him good-bye, Woodhouse cut off a lock of Keats's hair. This lock is still extant,[1] with an inscription in Woodhouse's handwriting:

> "A Lock of the hair of John Keats which I cut off at Gravesend on Sunday the[2] Sept[br] 1820 on board the Maria Crowther just prior to leaving him.
>
> He was to sail for Naples for the benefit of his health on the following day —
>
> R[D] WOODHOUSE."

The envelope is dated "18 Sept. 1820."

On the way to Gravesend, Severn announced that his passport had not come, whereupon Haslam, serviceable and reliable as always, undertook to see that it should be there before the vessel sailed the next day. Late in the afternoon both Woodhouse and Haslam had said their farewells and departed, and the travellers, although still moored in an English river, were to all intents and purposes really off. By tea-time, they were alone with Mrs. Pidgeon, the lady passenger, and Keats's old life was become a thing of memories and dreams.

[1] Morgan Collection. [2] Date left blank in original.

CHAPTER XIII

ITALIAN JOURNEY. THE END

DURING the first days of the voyage, Severn kept a journal which he sent to Haslam, and even after the regular journal was discontinued, he wrote voluminous letters to Haslam, to Brown, to Taylor. In later years, Severn compiled more than one set of reminiscences of his voyage and stay in Italy with Keats, but his memory was not always dependable as to details. It is therefore wise to rely upon the contemporary account whenever possible, and use the later ones merely to fill in small facts.

Under the date of "Sunday, 17 Sept. 1820" Severn tells Haslam exactly what happened from the moment that devoted friend left the ship. A curious tone of lightness and banality pervades these first communications of Severn's. We shall do well to note it, it is a touchstone to his character, which was more amiable than firm, more kindly than wise; we must also remember that Severn was fully persuaded that Keats would recover, he seems to have been allowed to go off with the invalid without ever having been fully posted as to the extreme seriousness of his condition. He knew that Keats believed himself dying, but that he discounted. It is very evident that he took things always at their face value; if Keats were cheerful in appearance, Severn believed him so in reality. Admiration for Keats, Severn had to an unbounded degree, but few, if any, of Keats's friends can have understood him less. Severn's account of that Sunday evening is as follows:

[1] "We were soon reconciled to everything about from the Captain down to his Cat — is it not most delightful that

[1] Severn's journal letter is taken from a transcript of the original letter in the Crewe Collection, published by Sir Sidney Colvin in the *Times Literary Supplement*, April 16, 1914, and from a contemporary copy found among Taylor's papers. Author's Collection.

the less we have the less we want — this little cabin with 6 beds and at first sight every inconvenience in one hour was more endeared to us — and to our every purpose — than the most stately Palace — Keats seem'd happy — seem'd to have got at the thing he wanted he cracked his jokes at tea and was quite the "special fellow" of olden times — the kind Mrs. Pidgeon our Lady passenger did the honors of the tea table with the most unaf[f]ected good nature — and we repaid her most gallantly by falling into a sound sleep — and serenading her with a snoring duett — for I have the vanity to think that Keats and myself would continue our harmony even in sleep. I awoke several times with the oddest notions — the first time in a Shoemaker's shop — the next down in a wine cellar pretty well half seas over — but we came to the last snore of our duett — rubbed our eyes and said — 'we'll go to bed' — we slept most soundly — Mrs. P. has a side scene to retire to."

At midnight, long after Keats and Severn, exhausted by their early start, had gone to bed, a small Dundee smack, inward bound, came to anchor close to the "Maria Crowther." On board of her was Brown. Keats's letter had finally reached him, and he had hurried to the nearest port to where he was, Dundee, and taken passage on the first boat he could find sailing for London, a little coasting smack, in which he came as fast as the rather clumsy craft would allow. At daybreak the next morning, the smack weighed her anchor and proceeded to London on the inflowing tide; and by the time Keats and Severn came on deck, she had been gone for some hours. I do not know whether to consider this an unfortunate circumstance or not. Partings were terrible to Keats, and Brown had no intention of going with him to Italy, a fact which Keats would have heard on the instant, and which could not have sounded otherwise than cruel and unfeeling.

This Monday, September eighteenth, is carefully recorded by Severn:

"I arose and looked at Keats — he felt faint in his voice

but in other respects well — our fair passenger came about 8, quite well. We took breakfast and I can assure you enjoy'd it — our Captain is a good fellow — if he makes us happy his object is gained — Keats took his breakfast well. I had proposed to go shore to Gravesend — he thought this a good opportunity to have some things from the Chymists — which I got him — with half a hundred apples and 2 dozen biscuits etc., etc. — and the Captain was trying to buy a goat for him — but was not successful — we all returned in a real full boat — to dinner. Keats was full of his waggery — looked well — ate well — and was well — at six came down my passport — we were not surprised for we made sure of it since our oak friend Haslam had the getting of it. The other lady passenger arrived soon after — a Miss Cotterell — very lady like — but a sad martyr to her illness — which is to a jot the same as Keats . . . the passport coming had unloosed all my prattle — and in a short time Keats backing me with his golden jokes in support of my tinsel — we made Miss Cotterell to laugh and be herself — my wit would have dropt in a minute but for Keats plying me — but I was done up for all that — leaving him sole master — but I struck up again in my own language or Keats would have borne the Lady off in triumph. I began drawing my picture for my dear sister Maria . . . after this I drew a Moonlight scene from the Sea which took until 12 (middle watch) 'the house had gone to rest' — Keats was in sound sleep."

Keats was by no means in the buoyant spirits he assumed; among the medicines which Severn was commissioned to get at the chemist's was a small bottle of laudanum, which Keats wanted for a very special reason, a reason not guessed by Severn at the time. Keats had determined that when his illness proved to be quite incurable, he would spare himself the horrible sufferings of a lingering death by quietly taking an overdose of laudanum. All the time that he was cracking jokes and making puns to fool Severn and amuse Mrs. Pidgeon, he was planning

and preparing for the worst. Why he waited till Gravesend to get the laudanum was probably because at the Brawnes' and at Taylor's a request for it would have aroused suspicion, while Severn was so blind and uncomprehending that Keats knew he could be trusted to see no farther into anything than its surface. It is only the surface which we get from Severn in his journal. How little intimate he and Keats really were, how unaccustomed Keats was to confiding in him, his complete ignorance of Keats's affairs plainly shows. He knew nothing of Keats's engagement, did not, indeed, even suspect that he was in love with Miss Brawne. All Keats's more intimate circle knew this, but Severn was outside that circle, a fact which Severn's later utterances have quite obscured. Severn had, at this time, no idea of George's supposed defection, and he was far too trite a person to realize the desolation which Keats felt at having heard nothing from Brown. We must not forget these things as we read Severn's entries of these early days, they play like a dismal organ point beneath the events which he relates.

The "Maria Crowther" seems to have sailed in the small hours of Tuesday morning. Here is Severn on that day:

> "19th Sept., Tuesday, off Dover Castle, &c.
>
> I arose at day break to see the glorious eastern gate — Keats slept till 7 — Miss C. was rather ill this morning I prevailed on her to walk the deck with me at half past 6 she recovered much — Keats was still better this morning and Mrs. Pidgeon looked and was the picture of health — but poor me! I began to feel a waltzing on my stomach at breakfast when I wrote the note to you I was going it most soundly — Miss Cotterell followed me — then Keats who did it in the most gentlemanly manner — and then the saucy Mrs. Pidgeon who had been laughing at us — four faces bequeathing to the mighty deep their breakfasts — here I must change to a minor key Miss C. fainted — we soon recovered her — I was very ill nothing but lying

down would do for me. Keats ascended his bed — from which he dictated surgically like Esculapius of old in basso-relievo — through him Miss C. was recovered we had a cup of tea each and no more went to bed and slept until it was time to go to bed — we could not get up again — and slept in our clothes all night — Keats the King — not even looking pale."

The next day, Wednesday the twentieth, brought a plentiful supply of discomforts. Severn's journal, dated "Wednesday off Brighton," gives a vivid picture of them:

"Beautiful morning — we all breakfasted on deck and recovered as we were could enjoy it — about 10 Keats said a storm was hatching — he was right — the rain came on and we retired to our cabin — it abated and once more we came on deck — at 2 storm came on furiously — we retired to our beds. The rolling of the ship was death to us — towards 4 it increased and our situation was alarming — the trunks rolled across the cabin — the water poured in from the skylight and we were tumbled from one side to the other of our beds — my curiosity was raised to see the storm — and my anxiety to see Keats for I could only speak to him when in bed — I got up and fell down on the floor from my weakness and the rolling of the ship. Keats was very calm — the ladies were much frightened and would scarce speak — when I got up to the deck I was astounded — the waves were in mountains and washed the ship — the watery horizon was like a mountainous country — but the ship's motion was beautifully to the sea falling from one wave to the other in a very lovely manner — the sea each time crossing the deck and one side of the ship being level with the water — this when I understood gave me perfect ease — I communicated below and it did the same — but when the dusk came the sea began to rush in from the side of our cabin from an opening in the planks — this made us rather long faced — for it came by pailfulls — again I got out and said to Keats 'here's pretty music for you' — with the greatest calmness he answered me only by 'Water parted from the sea.' . . . I staggered up again and the storm was awful — the Captain and

Mate soon came down — for our things were squashing about in the dark — they struck a light and I succeeded in getting my desk of[f] the ground — with clothes and books, &c. The Captain finding it could not be stopped — tacked about from our voyage — and the sea ceased to dash against the cabin for we were sailing against wind and tide — but the horrible agitation continued in the ship lengthways — here were the pumps working — the sails squalling the confused voices of the sailors — the things rattling about in every direction and us poor devils pinn'd up in our beds like ghosts by daylight — except Keats he was himself all the time — the ladies suffered the most — but I was out of bed a dozen times to wait on them and tell them there *was* no danger — my sickness made me get into bed very soon each time — but Keats this morning brags of my sailorship — he says could I have kept on my legs in the water cabin I should have been a standing miracle."

This journal to Haslam was begun and concluded on Thursday, the twenty-first of September (wrongly dated the twentieth by Severn), so that his entry of that day goes no farther than the morning:

"I caught a sight of the moon about 3 o'clock this morning — and ran down to tell the glad tidings — but the surly rolling of the sea was worse than the storm — the ship trembled to it — and the sea was scarcely calmed by daylight — so that we were kept from 2 o'clock yesterday until 6 this morning without anything — well it has done us good, we are like a Quartett of fighting cocks this morning. The morning is serene we are now back again some 20 miles — waiting for a wind — but full of spirits — Keats is without even complaining and Miss Cottrell has a colour in her face — the sea has done his worst upon us. I am better than I have been for years. Farewell my dear fellow."

The storm had driven the "Maria Crowther" so far back on her course that she was now off Dungeness, and,

what made matters worse, the wild weather was succeeded by a dead calm. We have no farther knowledge of Thursday, but a stray leaf from Severn's own journal[1] tells us briefly of Friday and Saturday:

"Sept 22nd Friday — A Flat day — waiting for wind in the Dundee Ness Roads — went on shore with the Captain — and found it a wide expanse of Gravel — 2 houses in about 6 miles — and a solitary yard of Furze — Keats appetite increasing.

Sept 23 Saturday — Still waiting for a wind — flat, very flat — Keats beat me hollow at the trencher."

This slim account can be amplified somewhat from one of Severn's later reminiscences:[2]

> "At Dungeness we scrambled over the gravel; and on the opposite side I was astonished and delighted with the enormous waves, at least ten feet high, rushing in upon the shore. The sight fixed me in wonder and abstraction, until a miserable excize man appeared and demanded what I was doing. My bewildered explanation only confirmed his suspicion that I was looking out for contraband — which let down all the high romance which the waves had inspired."

While the "Maria Crowther" was enduring storm and calm in the English Channel, Keats's friends in England were thinking of him as well started on his voyage. Brown, who was greatly chagrined at arriving in London too late to see him, and whose house was probably let until October, had betaken himself to old Mr. Dilke's at Chichester. Taylor, having written an account of Keats's departure to Reynolds, had gone on a visit to his brother in Leicester. Reynolds's answer,[3] which seems to have reached Taylor before he left, is of considerable moment

[1] *Bulletin of Keats-Shelley Memorial Association.* Rome. Vol. I.
[2] *Life of Joseph Severn,* by William Sharp.
[3] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.

to us from the light it throws on various things. It is dated: "Exmouth — 21 Sept 1820." I quote it in part only, the rest of the letter has no concern with Keats:

> "I do not know when I have been more gratified at the receipt of a letter than now, for you give me the best of news, full to the brim, that Keats is positively off for a better Lung-land. — There is no half-measure information of expected departure or promised amendment, — but smack you come down upon me with the *Ultimatum* Sir John. Your Alphabet commences at Z. Your Letter is in finals only. . .
>
> Seriously, my dear Taylor, I am very, *very*, much pleased at what you tell me, — and the more so, since Keats has departed so comfortably, so cheerfully, so sensibly. I cannot now but hold a hope of his refreshed health, which I confess his residence in England greatly discouraged, particularly as he was haunted by one or two heartless and *demented* people whose opinions and conduct could not but silently influence the bearings of his thoughts & hopes. Absence from the poor idle Thing of Woman-Kind, to whom he has so unaccountably attached himself, will not be an ill thing; And who would not be banished from the vain and heartless Eternity of Mr. Leigh Hunt's indecent discoursings . . . Keats, then, by this, is at Sea fairly, — with England and one or two sincere friends behind him, — and with a warm clime before his face! If ever I wished well to man, I wish well to *him!* I should indeed have liked to have seen him off with you, but Woodhouse & yourself are a Host of friends in yourselves, and he is not unmindful of you, I warrant me, at this moment!
>
> You scarcely tell me enough, I fancy, of the Brawnes, or whether Keats said anything of *them* before he left. They have been really attentive to him, which we should not forget. Severn will much like the voyage, & greatly pleasure Keats, if I mistake not: Though he is scarcely the resolute, intelligent or cheerful companion which a long voyage and a sickly frame so anxiously call for. I wish you yourself could have cast Fleet Street & Dull Care behind you, and have taken a trip with our ailing friend: — But we

must not, as Sancho says, look for better bread than's made of corn!"

Reynolds's remarks on Leigh Hunt give us a little peep into one of the many divisions into which Keats's old group was breaking up. Those on Fanny Brawne reveal his prejudice and jealousy, constantly fed, we may believe, by his sisters. What he has to say of Severn, on the other hand, being perfectly dispassionate opinion, may be relied upon as fact. Severn was not the man any one would have selected to go with Keats. He was "Hobson's choice," and we shall find that such was the general verdict among Keats's friends.

Light flawy breezes seem to have succeeded the flat calm, and by the time Portsmouth was reached, on Thursday, September twenty-eighth, what wind there was blew from the wrong quarter and Captain Walsh put into Portsmouth Harbour to wait for a change. The ten days beating about the channel with no material headway had so disgusted Keats that it would have taken very little to induce him to give up the voyage altogether and return to London. But Keats was a sensible man and possessed of an indomitable will; he had determined to try what Italy could do for him and would not weaken.

Bedhampton, where the Snooks lived, was only seven miles from Portsmouth, and it occurred to Keats that if the "Maria Crowther" were detained in harbour over night, it would be very pleasant to go ashore and make them a visit. Miss Cotterell, nice girl though she was, depressed him by her continual fainting fits, while Mrs. Pidgeon did not improve upon acquaintance, quite the contrary, and both young men had begun to dislike her heartily. The Captain, on being consulted, declared that there was no likelihood of the brig's being able to sail before the next day at the earliest. So Keats and Severn set off for Bedhampton, where they found an astonished, but exceedingly

warm, welcome from the Snooks. On arrival, they were told the rather discouraging news that Brown was staying ten miles off at Chichester with Mrs. Snook's father. I call this news discouraging, for a proximity which cannot bring about a desired meeting is very hard to bear. Two accounts of this visit exist, one from Brown to Taylor, one from Mrs. Snook to Mrs. Dilke. In these days of motors and telephones, Brown could have been apprised of Keats's arrival in Bedhampton at once, and could have run over from Chichester in less than half an hour to see him, and Keats need not have feared to venture the extra distance from the ship. In 1820, no such possibilities existed. Brown did not know of Keats's being at the Snooks' until a week after it had happened; once again, therefore, the two friends were within an ace of meeting and did not. Brown's letter,[1] dated "Chichester. 5th Septr [a slip of the pen, it should be Octr] 1820" reads:

"Dear Taylor,

If neither Keats nor Severn has written from Portsmouth, and I believe neither of them has, I have some news gratifying to you & to our friends in London. They landed at Portsmouth after having been tossed about in the Channel for ten days. This was on Thursday 28th. Having a day to spare, they went to Bedhampton, a distance of 7 miles, to visit Mr & Mrs Snook, who were here yesterday afternoon & gave me the following particulars. His health was better than they expected from the accounts they had previously heard, and Severn talked cheeringly of him. On the following morning (Friday) his spirits were excellent. He abuses the Captain, tho' he acknowledges him to be civil & accommodating. He likes one of the Ladies, and has an aversion for the other, whom he rediculed with all the bustling wit of a man in saucy health. He was so sick of the voyage, that a word might have sent him back to London. Unknown to Severn he put on a blister (on his chest) soon after he went on board,

[1] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.



THE TOWERS, BEDHAMPTON. WHERE KEATS SPENT HIS LAST NIGHT IN ENGLAND

From a photograph in the possession of Louis A. Holman, Esq.

convinced it would relieve him, and it appears he believes it has relieved him. Still however he is full of his old apprehensions. He knew I was here (within ten miles) but did not dare to come, lest the wind should change; — how strangely unlucky that we should *twice* have been so near a meeting & yet not met! Had he known where I was at an earlier hour on Thursday, I think he would have come. No! I am mistaken, he could not. I tell you every thing — trifles & all — that you may form your opinion of him. Neither the boisterous weather, nor his antipathies, nor his anger, will do him harm; — on the contrary they will be of service, — they are good physic to his mind, & will help to purge away his apprehensions. He wrote to me in Scotland he was confident the indulgence of his friends injured him, & a letter from me to the same effect crossed on the road. He sailed from Portsmouth on Friday afternoon, with a fair wind, which has continued ever since. Both he and Severn said they should not write; I suppose they relied on my doing so. I send this account to none but yourself, & leave you to disseminate it as you please. Compts to Mr. Hessey. I shall direct this to both of you, lest you should be out of Town, & have too much postage to pay for my scrawl.

Your's most truly,
CHAS BROWN."

Our opinion of Brown's perspicacity receives a sad blow from this letter. His remarks about Keats being injured by the indulgence of his friends prove him to have completely misunderstood Keats's dangerous condition. There are none so blind as those who will not see. To talk of a man who has had a number of hæmorrhages as likely to be injured by indulgence is more than folly, it is cruelty. Brown needed to salve his conscience, he did not wish, nor intend, to go to Italy, but he wanted to think himself perfectly justified in not going. Brown was tired of the post of nurse and banker, which was perhaps not unnatural; but once again, in the matter of friendship, we find Keats trusting and deceived. Severn's claim to the gratitude of

posterity is just that, although not at all the man for the job, he stuck to Keats through thick and thin till the end.

The second account of the Bedhampton visit is quoted in a letter of October sixth from Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats:

> "I received a letter from Mrs. Dilke with part of a letter from a relation of hers[1] copied out . . . as I shall copy it . . . 'I have had some very unexpected visitors Mr. Keats and Mr. Severn. They had been beating about with a contrary wind ever since they left London, and at last put into Portsmouth. I think Mr. Keats much better than I expected and Mr. Severn said he was sure that notwithstanding the hardships they had undergone, he was much better than when he left London.' I cannot say this news pleased me much, I was in hopes that by this time he was half way to Naples. He left Portsmouth on the 29th. of September, the wind being favorable, the next day it again changed contrary to their wishes, but they did not return so it is supposed the captain put to sea."

The captain had put to sea, but much good it had done him. It was tack, tack, tack, and almost no real headway, all that night and Saturday, on which day one of the port tacks brought them off Yarmouth, Isle of Wight. Here the wind gave out, and while the vessel lay becalmed, Keats wrote a letter to Brown, which must be given in full, to balance the totally misleading accounts of his cheerfulness sent back to London by Severn, Brown, and Mrs. Snook. Keats mistook the day of the month, a usual occurrence with him; it should not confuse us, the letter was written on September thirtieth.

[2] "Saturday, Sept[r]. 28
Maria Crowther
Off Yarmouth. isle of wight

MY DEAR BROWN,

The time has not yet come for a pleasant Letter from me. I have delayed writing to you from time to time be-

[1] Mrs. Snook. [2] Corrected from original letter. Author's Collection.

cause I felt how impossible it was to enliven you with one heartening hope of my recovery; this morning in bed the matter struck me in a different manner; I thought I would write 'while I was in some liking' or I might become too ill to write at all and then if the desire to have written should become strong it would be a great affliction to me. I have many more letters to write and I bless my stars that I have begun, for time seems to press, — this may be my best opportunity. We are in a calm and I am easy enough this morning. If my spirits seem too low you may in some degree impute it to our having been at sea a fortnight without making any way. I was very disappointed at not meeting you at bedhampton, and am very provoked at the thought of you being at Chichester to day. I should have delighted in setting off for London for the sensation merely — for what should I do there? I could not leave my lungs or stomach or other worse things behind me. I wish to write on subjects that will not agitate me much — there is one I must mention and have done with it. Even if my body would recover of itself, this would prevent it. The very thing which I want to live most for will be a great occasion of my death. I cannot help it. Who can help it? Were I in health it would make me ill, and how can I bear it in my state? I dare say you will be able to guess on what subject I am harping — you know what was my greatest pain during the first part of my illness at your house. I wish for death every day and night to deliver me from these pains, and then I wish death away, for death would destroy even those pains which are better than nothing. Land and sea, weakness and decline are great separators, but death is the great divorcer for ever. When the pang of this thought has passed through my mind, I may say the bitterness of death is passed. I often wish for you that you might flatter me with the best. I think without my mentioning it for my sake you would be a friend to Miss Brawne when I am dead. You think she has many faults — but, for my sake, think she has not one — — If there is anything you can do for her by word or deed I know you will do it. I am in a state at present in which woman merely as woman can have no more power over me

than stocks and stones, and yet the difference of my sensations with respect to Miss Brawne and my Sister is amazing. The one seems to absorb the other to a degree incredible. I seldom think of my Brother and Sister in america. The thought of leaving Miss Brawne is beyond everything horrible — the sense of darkness coming over me — I eternally see her figure eternally vanishing. Some of the phrases she was in the habit of using during my last nursing at wentworth place ring in my ears. Is there another Life? Shall I awake and find all this a dream? There must be we cannot be created for this sort of suffering. The receiving this letter is to be one of yours. I will say nothing about our friendship or rather yours to me more than that as you deserve to escape you will never be so unhappy as I am. I should think of — you in my last moments. I shall endeavour to write to Miss Brawne if possible to day. A sudden stop to my life in the middle of one of these letters would be no bad thing, for it keeps one in a sort of fever awhile. Though fatigued with a letter longer than any I have written for a long while it would be better to go on for ever than awake to a sense of contrary winds. We expect to put into Portland roads to night. The cap^{tn} the Crew and the Passengers are all illtemper'd and weary. I shall write to dilke. I feel as if I was closing my last letter to you.

My dear Brown,
Your affectionate friend,
JOHN KEATS."

There is no mention here of jealousy. Fanny Brawne seems to have put an end to that forever while Keats was at Wentworth Place. But there is a mention of a projected letter to Miss Brawne. It was never written; if it had been, it would have been in her bundle of Keats's letters, and it was not. Keats wrote no letter at all to Fanny Brawne during these last months of his life. Why he did not do so, is one of the most baffling queries his psychology offers to a biographer. I can only explain it by the fact that already he knew her dead to him. Passionately as he

longed to believe in a life after death, he could not do so. His only hope of tranquillity lay in keeping himself artificially calm. To write to her was to open the door to life once more, to ache for her with an intensity which he could not bear. To most people, communication is a comfort; life, still clung to, affords a measure of relief. Not so to Keats. Believing absolutely in his approaching death, he wished to die, to have it all over and done with as soon as possible. He had made the supreme sacrifice of leaving Fanny Brawne behind; the minor sacrifice of writing to her for her comfort he could not make.

Portland Roads proved an impossible objective for that night, and we do not know how much time elapsed before another calm near Lulworth Cove in Dorsetshire enabled the two young men to set foot on land once more. Severn waxes eloquent over this occasion in his later reminiscences. He says:

> [1]"For a moment he became like his former self. He was in a part that he already knew, and showed me the splendid caverns and grottos with a poet's pride, as though they had been his by birthright."

Perhaps they were. I have already dealt with this subject in an earlier part of this book,[2] and, to avoid duplication, will not do so here. Severn's "splendid caverns and grottos" is a little strong, but sentimental overstatement was one of Severn's irritating traits.

On their return to the ship, Keats wrote the *Bright Star* sonnet in a copy of Shakespeare's *Poems* he had brought with him, and gave the book, with the sonnet in it, to Severn. It is a little uncertain whether or not Severn knew the sonnet to be an old one, at the time. In after years, he certainly believed it to have been composed then and there. In writing it down, Keats changed it slightly from the original version, and in every case the change

[1] *Life of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp. [2] See Vol. I, p. 6.

is an improvement. "Devout" is altered to "patient," the "morning waters" become "moving waters," and the line:

"Cheek-pillowed on my Love's white ripening breast,'

gives place to the simpler

"Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast."

In the tenth line, the rather unsatisfactory "touch," disappears in favour of the much better "feel." The final couplet, which was originally:

"To hear, to feel her tender-taken breath,
Half passionless, and so swoon on to death."

stands in the new version:

"Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever — or else swoon to death."

By this change, the bitterness of the first ending entirely disappears; in its stead, there is only a forlorn, majestic peace.

I doubt very much whether these corrections were made on board the "Maria Crowther." Such things take time, and Severn would surely have noticed it if Keats had not written the sonnet straight off. Also, from what we know of Keats's health and state of mind, it does not seem possible for him to have worked over the sonnet then. I am inclined, therefore, to attribute these changes to an earlier revision of which we have no knowledge. He copied the sonnet on a blank page facing *A Lover's Complaint*, which may, or may not, have been intentional.

Exactly when the "Maria Crowther" actually left Portland Roads with a fair wind, is not known, but it must have been very soon after the landing at Lulworth Cove. This time everything favoured them. The wind held, and England was left behind at last.

The voyage fairly embarked upon was, for the most part, distressing enough. Mrs. Pidgeon proved to be a most unpleasant and unfeeling woman. When poor Miss Cotterell fainted, she would do nothing to help her, but left her entirely to Severn, working under Keats's direction. Miss Cotterell's state was extremely prejudicial to Keats's spirits, who had a duplicate of himself constantly before his eyes. Then, too, the invalids were forever comparing symptoms, after the manner of their kind. The poor food and the wretched accommodations (five sleeping in one cabin), to say nothing of the disheartening surroundings, brought on a recurrence of blood-spitting and Keats grew visibly worse from day to day. Alike as Keats and Miss Cotterell were in their general conditions, in one particular they were utterly dissimilar. The result of this dissimilarity I will give in Severn's words. The passage is from a letter to Haslam, written after the arrival in Naples:

> [1] "The lady passenger though in the same state as Keats — yet differing in constitution required almost everything the opposite to him — for instance if the cabin windows were not open she would faint and remain entirely insensible 5 or 6 hours together — if the windows were open poor Keats would be taken with a cough (a violent one — caught from this cause) and sometimes spitting of blood."

The outward events of the voyage were on the whole tranquil. There were squalls, of course, and a storm, but no weather so bad as that they had encountered in the channel. After one of these squalls in the Bay of Biscay, Keats began reading the shipwreck scene from Byron's *Don Juan*, but soon threw it petulantly aside, exclaiming that it was abominable that a man like Byron should find his chief pleasure in laughing and gloating over such scenes of misery. Byron's poetry, he declared, was based upon a

[1] The *Times Literary Supplement*, April 16, 1914. Also copy by Woodhouse. Author's Collection.

paltry originality, that of being new by making solemn things gay and gay things solemn. I do not put quotation marks here because these are not Keats's words, they are Severn's recollection of what he said, written down twenty-five years later. Sir Sidney Colvin has pointed out that these may have been Keats's feelings, but that Severn has given us "nothing of his way of expressing them," with which opinion I entirely concur.

In a calm off Cape St. Vincent, Severn tells us, Keats was enchanted with the play of colours over the smooth sea; and the appearance of a whale come up to spout was a strange and absorbing sight. Shortly after this, the passengers had an unpleasant scare. The "Maria Crowther" was once more becalmed, and in this uncomfortable plight found herself close to a Portuguese man-of-war. Captain Walsh was below, shaving, and apparently the mate did not consider it necessary to pay any attention to the signals made by the Portuguese vessel. Suddenly a shot passed over the "Maria Crowther's" stern. The passengers were in a panic, Captain Walsh rushed up on deck, and a parley began. Some one shouted from the deck of the Portuguese ship in English, demanding to know if the brig had sighted any privateers. Captain Walsh replied in the negative, and the "Maria Crowther" was allowed to drift on. Portugal was at this time engaged in a busy little revolution, and the Portuguese ship was out to intercept any vessel going to the relief of the revolutionists. In the afternoon, the "Maria Crowther" ran across an English sloop-of-war and informed her officers of the morning adventure, whereupon the sloop immediately went about and started in pursuit of the Portuguese ship. I make no apology for including this little vignette of sea life; it is so pleasantly indicative of an age the very paraphernalia of which has totally disappeared.

Gibraltar was passed before dawn one morning, a huge, dim shape in the semi-darkness, but at sunrise the coast of

Africa became visible, red and gleaming in the bright, level rays. Keats was entranced with the view, says Severn, and lay gazing at it while Severn sketched. On days when he felt a little better, Keats's mind would revert to poetry, and he talked to Severn about a poem which, if well enough, he meant some day to write on the story of Sabrina.

So the days passed, Keats on the whole not so well as when he left England, and on Saturday, October twenty-first, the "Maria Crowther" sailed into the Bay of Naples and was at once put in quarantine. This was a terrible thing for the invalids. The weather was very bad, constant rain prevented the opening of the cabin windows or staying on deck. Severn's description, sent to Haslam, is graphic:

> "We are just released from the loathsome misery of quarantine — foul weather and foul air for the whole 10 days kept us to the small cabin — surrounded by about 2,000 ships in a wretched hole not sufficient for half the number, yet Keats is still living — may I not have hopes of him? He has passed what I must have thought would kill myself."

The unpleasantness of confinement in close quarters was augmented by the arrival, and immediate detention, of a lieutenant and six men from an English naval vessel at anchor in the harbour, who, having rowed over to make inquiries as to where the "Maria Crowther" hailed from and what her business, were so unwise as to board her, and were not permitted by the quarantine officer to leave. Mr. Cotterell, Miss Cotterell's brother, also joined the prisoners, which, although pleasant in many ways, increased the cramped condition. Charles Cotterell, of the firm of Cotterell and Company, bankers, 10 Largo della Vittoria, Naples, was a thoroughly nice fellow, and at the moment an extremely grateful one. His sister had told him of the value of Keats's medical advice to her during the voyage,

and of Severn's attentions, and he could not do enough for both young men. He made their detention as pleasant as he could by keeping the "Maria Crowther" well supplied with fruit and flowers. Severn says that Keats "was never tired of admiring, (not to speak of eating!) the beautiful clusters of grapes and other fruits, and was scarce less enthusiastic over the autumnal flowers, though I remember his saying once that he would gladly give them all for a wayside dog-rose bush covered with pink blooms."[1]

The presence of Mr. Cotterell and Lieutenant Sullivan lent a false air of gaiety to the melancholy little brig. Says Severn, recollecting years afterwards: "All kinds of chaff went on, and Keats was not behind either Mr. Cotterell or Lieutenant Sullivan in witty puns and remarks." The terrible pathos of this is almost more than one can bear.

Severn seems to have really enjoyed these ten days. On starting from London, he had been troubled with his liver, and had looked so sallow that someone at Gravesend had asked whether he or Keats were the dying man. The voyage had done him good, and he saw everything with rose-coloured spectacles, a tint which increased with time, as the difference between his letter to Haslam and his later recollection shows. Keats, on the other hand, was miserable in mind and body. On the third day of their detention, Tuesday, October twenty-fourth, he nerved himself to write a letter to Mrs. Brawne. It is a brave and fine letter, seeking always to appear cheerful, minimizing his sufferings, saying as little to alarm as he can. But Mrs. Brawne was not Severn, and there was ample for her to read between the lines. The original of the letter[2] is badly discoloured, presumably from having been fumigated by the health officers:

[1] Reminiscences, quoted in *Life of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp.
[2] Dilke Collection.

"Oct. 24, Naples Harbour.

MY DEAR MRS. BRAWNE,

A few words will tell you what sort of a Passage we had, and what situation we are in, and few they must be on account of the Quarantine, our Letters being liable to be opened for the purpose of fumigation at the Health Office. We have to remain in the vessel ten days and are at present shut in a tier of ships. The sea air has been beneficial to me about to as great an extent as squally weather and bad accommodations and provisions has done harm. So I am about as I was. Give my Love to Fanny and tell her, if I were well there is enough in this Port of Naples to fill a quire of Paper — but it looks like a dream — every man who can row his boat and walk and talk seems a different being from myself. I do not feel in the world. It has been unfortunate for me that one of the Passengers is a young Lady in a Consumption — her imprudence has vexed me very much — the knowledge of her complaints[1] — the flushings in her face, all her bad symptoms have preyed upon me — they would have done so had I been in good health. Severn now is a very good fellow but his nerves are too strong to be hurt by other people's illnesses — I remember poor Rice wore me in the same way in the Isle of Wight — I shall feel a load off me when the Lady vanishes out of my sight. It is impossible to describe exactly in what state of health I am — at this moment I am suffering from indigestion very much, which makes such stuff of this Letter. I would always wish you to think me a little worse than I really am; not being of a sanguine disposition I am likely to succeed. If I do not recover your regret will be softened — if I do your pleasure will be doubled. I dare not fix my Mind upon Fanny, I have not dared to think of her. The only comfort I have had that way has been in thinking for hours together of having the knife she gave me put in a silver-case — the hair in a Locket — and the Pocket Book in a gold net. Show her this. I dare say no more. Yet you must not believe I am so ill as this Letter may look, for if ever there was a person born without the faculty of hoping I am he. Severn is writing to Haslam,

[1] Undoubtedly Keats meant to write "complaint."

and I have just asked him to request Haslam to send you his account of my health. O what an account I could give you of the Bay of Naples if I could once more feel myself a Citizen of this world — I feel a spirit in my Brain would lay it forth pleasantly — O what a misery it is to have an intellect in splints! My Love again to Fanny — tell Tootts[1] I wish I could pitch her a basket of grapes — and tell Sam the fellows catch here with a line a little fish much like an anchovy, pull them up fast. Remember me to Mr. and Mrs. Dilke — mention to Brown that I wrote him a letter at Port[s]mouth which I did not send and am in doubt if he ever will see it.

My dear Mrs. Brawne

Yours sincerely and affectionate

JOHN KEATS —

Good bye Fanny! God bless you."

On Tuesday, October thirty-first, the ten days were up, and the passengers were allowed to land. But the city which had looked so beautiful from the bay proved to be muddy, noisy, and squalid. To add to the discomfort, the day was chilly, with fog and rain. Presumably the first thing they did was to go and have their passports viséed. It is all here, on the back of Keats's passport, where the first *visé* in translation reads:

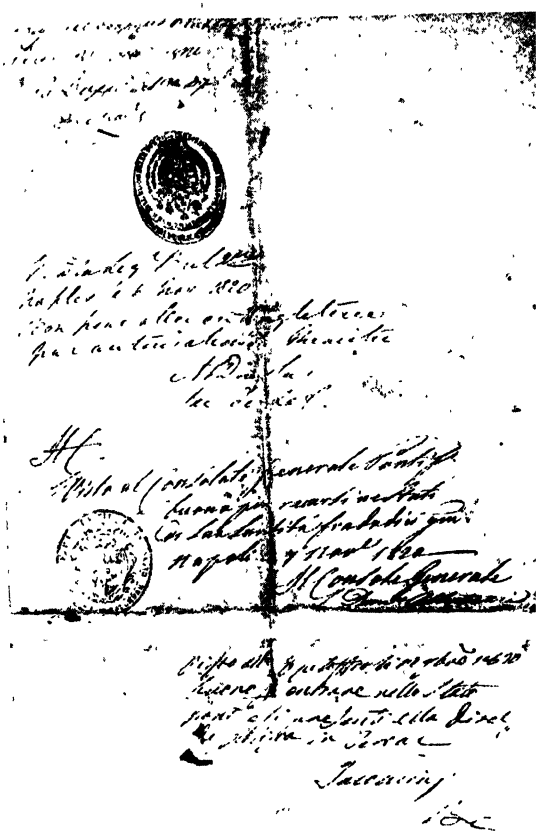
"Registered with the Council of Public Security, Naples, 31, Oct. 1820.

At the office of the 3rd Department.

J. NADIA."

This formality over, the friends went at once to a hotel, the Villa da Londra, in the Strada di Santa Lucia, to which they were taken by Mr. Cotterell. Keats was wretchedly depressed, and his self-control was nearly gone. Even Severn was affected. In his letter, written the next day, Wednesday, to Haslam, from which I have already twice quoted, there is this paragraph:

[1] Probably Margaret Brawne, Mrs. Brawne's youngest child.



KEATS'S PASSPORT TO ITALY (SECOND PAGE)
From the original in the possession of Oliver R. Barrett, Esq.

"Now that we are on shore and feel the fresh air, I am horror struck at his sufferings on this voyage, all that could be fatal to him in air and diet — with the want of medicine and conveniences he has weather'd it, if I may call his poor shattered frame and broken heart — weathering it. For myself I have stood it firmly until this morning when in a moment my spirits dropt at the sight of his suffering — a plentiful shower of tears (which he did not see) has relieved me somewhat — what he has passed still unnerves me. But now we are breathing in a large room with Vesuvius in our view — Keats has become calm and thinks favourably of this place for we are meeting with much kind treatment on every side — more particularly from an English gentleman here (brother to Miss Cottrell one of our lady passengers) who has shown unusually humane treatment to Keats — unasked — these with very good accommodation at our Inn (Villa da Londra) have kept him up through dinner — but on the other hand Dr. Milne is at Rome (whither Keats is proposing to go) the weather is now cold, wet and foggy, and we find ourselves on the wrong side for his hope for recovery, (for the present I will talk to him — he is disposed to it. I will talk him to sleep for he has suffered much fatigue)."

This was evidently written in the afternoon, after dinner. In the morning, Keats had once more written to Brown, and again I shall give the whole letter:

"Naples,
1 November

MY DEAR BROWN,

Yesterday we were let out of Quarantine, during which my health suffered more from bad air and the stifled cabin than it had done the whole voyage. The fresh air revived me a little, and I hope I am well enough this morning to write to you a short calm letter; — if that can be called one, in which I am afraid to speak of what I would fainest dwell upon. As I have gone thus far into it, I must go on a little; — perhaps it may relieve the load of WRETCHEDNESS which presses upon me. The persuasion that I shall

see her no more will kill me. I cannot q——[1] My dear Brown, I should have had her when I was in health, and I should have remained well. I can bear to die — I cannot bear to leave her. O, God! God! God! Everything I have in my trunks that reminds me of her goes through me like a spear. The silk lining she put in my travelling cap scalds my head. My imagination is horribly vivid about her — I see her — I hear her. There is nothing in the world of sufficient interest to divert me from her a moment. This was the case when I was in England; I cannot recollect, without shuddering, the time that I was a prisoner at Hunt's, and used to keep my eyes fixed on Hampstead all day. Then there was a good hope of seeing her again — Now! — O that I could be buried near where she lives! I am afraid to write to her — to receive a letter from her — to see her handwriting would break my heart — even to hear of her anyhow, to see her name written, would be more than I can bear. My dear Brown, what am I to do? Where can I look for consolation or ease? If I had any chance of recovery, this passion would kill me. Indeed through the whole of my illness, both at your house and at Kentish Town, this fever has never ceased wearing me out. When you write to me, which you will do immediately, write to Rome (*poste restante*) — if she is well and happy, put a mark thus +; if ——

Remember me to all. I will endeavour to bear my miseries patiently. A person in my state of health should not have such miseries to bear. Write a short note to my sister, saying you have heard from me. Severn is very well. If I were in better health I would urge your coming to Rome. I fear there is no one can give me any comfort. Is there any news of George? O, that something fortunate had ever happened to me or my brothers! — then I might hope, — but despair is forced upon me as a habit. My dear Brown, for my sake, be her advocate for ever. I cannot say a word about Naples; I do not feel at all concerned in the thousand novelties around me. I am afraid to write to her — I should like her to know that I do not forget her. Oh,

[1] Brown made a note on this passage, he says: "He could not go on with this sentence nor even write the word 'quit' as I suppose." Quoted by Buxton Forman. Complete Edition.

Brown, I have coals of fire in my breast. It surprises me that the human heart is capable of containing and bearing so much misery. Was I born for this end? God bless her, and her mother, and my sister, and George, and his wife, and you, and all!

Your ever affectionate friend,

JOHN KEATS.

Thursday. — I was a day too early for the Courier. He sets out now. I have been more calm to-day, though in a half dread of not continuing so. I said nothing of my health; I know nothing of it; you will hear Severn's account, from [Haslam]. I must leave off. You bring my thoughts too near to Fanny. God bless you!"

There is no comment to make on such a letter as this, and I make none, save to point out that, although Keats believed George to have done him an injury in taking his money to America, yet his love for his brother persisted in spite of this opinion. Keats's nature was essentially affectionate.

Before this letter could reach England, Mrs. Brawne had received the one written to her from quarantine. Fanny Brawne speaks of it in a letter to Fanny Keats, written on November twenty-seventh, a reticent letter, in which she is evidently trying to look with might and main at any possible star-point in the gloom. It was a hard task. She says:

"I was so extremely happy to hear of his arrival at Naples, that I overlooked the hardships of their wretched voyage and even the bad spirits he wrote in. The weather was so much against him, joined to his spirits, which prey on him and continually make him worse that it would have been too much to expect any great improvement in his health. He mentioned that Mr. Severn was writing to Mr. Haslam and that we should have the letter to read, as it would give a better account of him than he could write himself . . ."

When Severn put Keats to bed that Wednesday night, intending to talk him to sleep, Keats's reserve was worn too thin to be longer maintained in its entirety. His temperament had always demanded the relief of expression, and when his brothers were no longer there to talk to, Brown gradually took their place. All the five weeks of the voyage, and during the ten days' quarantine, Keats had kept silence, but that night he was too physically weak and shattered to hold on any longer, and Severn heard something of the grief which was eating his heart out. Not much, apparently, merely the bare fact that he was in love without the faintest hope of ever being well again. That there was a definite engagement, Keats does not seem to have revealed to Severn; indeed, it is doubtful if, on this occasion, he told Severn who it was with whom he was in love. But the confidence — once made — relieved him a little, and at last he slept. Severn, continuing his letter to Haslam on Thursday, tells a good deal of what took place without betraying any secret which Haslam might not know:

"Nov. 2

Keats went to bed much recovered — I took every means to remove from him a heavy grief that may tend more than any thing to be fatal — he told me much — very much — and I don't know whether it was more painful for me or himself — but it had the effect of much relieving him — he went very calm to bed.

Poor fellow! he is still sleeping at half past nine, if I can but ease his mind I will bring him back to England *well* — but I fear it never can be done in this world — the grand scenery here effects him a little — but he is too infirm to enjoy it — his gloom deadens his sight to everything — and but for intervals of something like ease he must soon end it."

On waking up, however, Keats both felt and looked better, and Severn closed his letter much cheered:

"... this morning he is still very much better. We are in good spirits and I may say hopeful fellows — at least I may say as much for Keats — he made an Italian pun today — the rain is coming down in torrents."

It took very little to set Severn's spirits flying skywards, as Keats quite realized. He was easily deceived, so long as Keats had energy enough to deceive him.

In due time, Keats's letter to Brown was delivered at Wentworth Place, and, shortly after, Haslam got his from Severn. Severn's letter, being in the nature of a bulletin, was passed round among Keats's friends, and the duty of communicating the contents of both letters to the Brawnes was deputed to Brown. How skilfully he managed to make it appear that the news in Severn's letter was merely duplicated in his, the following paragraph from a letter of Miss Brawne's shows. The violence of Keats's misery and longing after his final separation from her was, considerately or inconsiderately, kept from Fanny Brawne from first to last. It is always a question how wise it is to protect people for their own good. Brown meant well, and probably his behaviour was in some measure dictated by Mrs. Brawne, but this conspiracy to keep the young girl in ignorance of facts which she had every right to know does not commend itself to a later century.

Under date of December fifth, she tells Fanny Keats:

"Mr. Brown has received a letter dated November 2nd ... when he wrote they were just arriving on shore their sufferings during the quarantine were beyond anything we can imagine ... you may imagine how lowering to the spirits it must have been when Mr. Severn who I never imagined it was possible for anything to make unhappy, who I never saw for ten minutes serious, says he was so overcome that he was obliged to relieve himself by shedding tears ... They had met with several friends who were extremely anxious to be kind to them, particularly the brother of a young lady passenger with them, who

went out in dreadful health, and who, God knows, I have a thousand times wished at the bottom of the sea, as I know she made it worse."

Here I must pause a moment and make room for part of a letter from Haslam to Severn, dated "Greenwich, 4th Dec., 1820." After telling Severn that his letter from quarantine[1] was so poignant that he had shown it to no one, Haslam goes on to speak of the Naples letter. Haslam knew Severn well, very well, yet even he seems to have realized the defects of Severn's temperament, for he gives him some excellent advice:

[2] ". . . to you, my friend, I hope he will have given what you stand much in need of — a confidence amounting to a faith. Study to gain this, Severn, for trust me, that much, very much with invalids depends upon the countenances of those about them. Omit no opportunities that present themselves to induce Keats to disburthen his mind to you. I know (tho' since he left England it has come to my knowledge) that he has much upon it. Avoid speaking of George to him. George is a scoundrel![3] but talk of his friends in England, of their love, their hopes of him. Keats must get himself well again, Severn, if but for us. I, for one, cannot afford to lose him. If I know what it is to love, I truly love John Keats. I sent your letter (the last) to Brown. Brown read it, with omissions and additions, next door, and returned it to me to-day."

In spite of Keats's unhappiness and his physical state, he was by no means obliged to keep within doors at the Villa da Londra. Not at all, he and Severn did the best they could under the circumstances to see the town. What they did, we know only through Severn's recollections, and he is

[1] Apparently missing. At any rate, not quoted by any one, so far as I can discover.

[2] *Life of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp.

[3] Haslam and Brown were thoroughly prejudiced against George Keats and never entirely changed their opinions, even when Dilke, Rice, and Reynolds, after hearing the facts, had entirely exonerated him.

not very clear as to the order in which the various events occurred, but I make no doubt that they did occur substantially as he relates them. The date he gives for the first outing seems unquestionably too early in their stay at Naples, but no matter for that. Here is Severn's account of the event:

> [1] "On the afternoon of the same day we came ashore we saw a grand review of the Neapolitan troops. The men had a fine, martial appearance I thought, but Keats would not allow that they had any backbone in them, and ere long events proved how right he was."

Keats and Severn were not four days in Naples, as Sir Sidney Colvin thought, the passport (which Sir Sidney had not seen) proves them to have been there at least a week. An interesting hearsay anecdote has recently been published, in *Reminiscences of a Literary Life* by Charles MacFarlane. MacFarlane had been living in Naples for four years, and in this Autumn of 1820 was a young fellow of twenty-one. Naples is not a large city, and the society of English residents among themselves was very restricted indeed. Naturally, therefore, MacFarlane knew Charles Cotterell, and Cotterell seems to have told him the anecdote, for he was not present himself on the afternoon to which it refers. Making all allowances for remembered words and such like things, nevertheless there seems no reason to question the main authenticity of the tale, which I shall tell in MacFarlane's words; he is speaking, of course, of Keats:

> ". . . he was driving with my friend Charles Cottrell from the Bourbon Museum, up the beautiful open road which leads up to Capo di Monte and the Ponte Rossi. On the way, in front of a villa or cottage, he was struck and moved by the sight of some rose-trees in full bearing. Thinking to gratify the invalid, Cottrell, a *ci-devant* officer in the Brit-

[1] *Life of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp.

ish Navy, jumped out of the carriage, spoke to somebody about the house or garden, and was back in a trice with a bouquet of roses.

'How late in the year! What an exquisite climate!' said the Poet; but on putting them to his nose, he threw the flowers down on the opposite seat, and exclaimed: 'Humbugs! They have no scent! What is a rose without its fragrance? I hate and abhor all humbug, whether in a flower or in a man or woman!' And having worked himself strongly up in the anti-humbug humour, he cast the bouquet out on the road. I suppose that the flowers were China roses, which have little odour at any time, and hardly any at the approach of winter.

Returning from that drive, he had intense enjoyment in halting close to the Capuan Gate, and in watching a group of *lazzaroni* or labouring men, as, at a stall with fire and cauldron by the roadside in the open air, they were disposing of an incredible quantity of macaroni, introducing it in long, unbroken strings into their capacious mouths, without the intermediary of anything but their hands. 'I like this,' said he; 'these hearty fellows scorn the humbug of knives and forks. Fingers were invented first. Give them some *carlini* that they may eat more! Glorious sight! How they take it in!'"

Two days after Keats's and Severn's arrival, King Ferdinand, in spite of having not long before sworn fealty to the new Neapolitan constitution, incontinently deserted his post and fled to the Austrians. His departure, however, seems to have made little difference as regards certain customs, if, as Severn says, the next happening took place on the very evening of the king's flight. This is what Severn remembers:

[1] "We went that evening to the San Carlo Theatre, and much admired the fine scene-painting, though the singing was not good, and the acting indifferent. We were particularly struck by the admirable painting or clever representation of two sentinels on the stage, one at either side. To

[1] *Life of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp.

> our astonishment — an amazement which gave way to indignation — we saw at the end of the act, the painted sentries become suddenly animated and move about. They were, in fact, real men, and such was the debasement of the Neapolitan national character that this outrage was actually permitted to pass without indignant challenge. This gross instance of tyrannical despotism was more than either of us could stand, so we rose and forthwith left — though not till Keats had exclaimed in a frenzy, 'Severn, we'll go on at once to Rome, for as I know that I shall not last long, it would make me die in anguish if I thought I was to be buried amid a people with such miserable political [debasement?].'"

If King Ferdinand took to his English man-of-war, en route to Austria, two days after Keats and Severn arrived in Naples, he must have gone on November third. Severn declares that, on the day after the theatre adventure, he and Keats were on their way to Rome, but there is certainly a discrepancy here, for they were still in Naples on November seventh. Since we have no contemporary account to put us right, we shall have to be content with the realization that Severn got his days a little mixed. While they were at the Villa da Londra, Keats read the whole of *Clarissa Harlowe* in nine volumes. A difficult feat to perform in a week; an almost impossible one, even for so omnivorous a reader as Keats, had the time been four days. In Naples, Keats received another letter from Shelley, again urging him to come to Pisa, but not inviting him to stay in the Shelleys' house. Keats, however, determined to keep to his plan of going to Rome. It would have been awkward for him to do otherwise, since any benefit which Severn might derive from the journey was contingent upon its objective being Rome. Also, Keats hoped much from Dr. Clark's care. He had written twice to Dr. Clark, once from the ship, and once from Naples, asking him to find suitable lodgings. There was nothing to be gained by lingering in

Naples, and Keats was anxious to be settled. On Monday, November sixth, Keats went to the British Legation and again had his passport viséed. The visé reads:

> "Seen at the British Legation in Naples. November 6, 1820. Good to go to England — By authority of the Minister.
>
> A. DOUGLAS,
> Secretary of Legation."

Why Keats wished his passport viséed for England, I am unable to understand. Was it a necessary formality in case he wanted to go home by a different route?

On Tuesday the seventh, another visé was applied for. This time to enable the travellers to enter the Papal States. In this case, a time limit is prescribed. The visé is explicit on this point:

> "Seen at the Papal Consulate General.
> Good to go into the States of His Holiness within 12 days.
> Naples, November 7, 1820.
>
> Consul General
> DOMINIC ALBERTAZZI."

Since the time was short, the way long, and a *vettura* a creeping, crawling sort of vehicle, we may suppose that the friends started their journey bright and early of a morning, and that this morning was the very next day, Wednesday, November eighth.

On the evening before their departure, Charles Cotterell insisted upon giving them a farewell dinner, a questionable attention as far as Keats was concerned. Cotterell and Company were wine merchants as well as bankers, and made excellent white and red Falernian wine from grapes grown in their own vineyards. From this trifling fact we can see that the dinner must have combined English heartiness with Italian charm, and been just such an occasion as would have delighted Keats two or three years earlier. Like Vesuvius itself, it came too late to afford him

any enjoyment. According to Severn, "Poor Keats made a special effort and was very entertaining; and he did not appear to suffer much." [1] Keats had an exquisite social sense, and we have seen how popular he made himself before illness sapped the spring of his vitality. Yet no such effort as this dinner should have been demanded of him. In permitting Cotterell to plan such an entertainment, Severn signally failed in both tact and sense.

It was a long distance from Naples to Rome, one hundred and thirty-nine miles, or nineteen posts, says Coxe's *Picture of Italy*, 1818. According to this volume, the journey was broken in three places, at Mola di Gaeta, at Terracina, and at Velletri. Roughly speaking, then, a day's journey was thirty-four miles. Severn says that the *vettura* went so slowly that he was able to walk nearly the whole way, in which case it is quite clear that he and Keats journeyed at no such speed as the compiler of this guide-book recommends. Also Severn says that "the roads were bad, and the accommodation at the wayside inns villainously coarse and unpalatable." The road was noted for its poor accommodations, but Severn speaks with such violence that it seems plain that he and Keats stopped at other places than those most frequented by travellers. In view of these things, I am very much inclined to think that it took Keats and Severn five days to accomplish the sixty-nine miles to Terracina, and that they stopped four nights on the road — at Capua, Santa Agata, Mola, and Fondi — making the journey, therefore, at the rate of about sixteen miles a day. Terracina, or rather the Torre dell' Epitafio, was the boundary post between the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the Papal States. This tower is an ancient edifice whose name is derived from the inscriptions carved upon it. A guard was stationed here, and all the personnel required to examine passports, luggage, etc., and here Keats's passport was viséed for the last time:

[1] Reminiscences quoted in *Life of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp.

"12, Nov. 1820.
Seen at the Epitafio. Good to enter the Papal States.
Given at the Directory of Police in Terrac[ina].
B.C."

With all our guessing, one thing is a fact. Keats and Severn reached Terracina on Sunday, November twelfth. They must, then, have taken the journey by very easy stages, or not have left Naples until Friday, the tenth, and the former appears the most likely supposition. It seems probable that, having come the five miles from Fondi and endured the necessary official delay at the Torre dell' Epitafio, Keats and Severn rested for the remainder of Sunday at Terracina. Starting on Monday, and proceeding at the same rate, their farther stopping places were probably Mesa, Torre de' Tre Ponti, Velletri, and Albano, and so straight to Rome, which they must have reached on Friday, November seventeenth. There were two post roads from Terracina to Rome, one over the Pontine Marshes, which was considered dangerous on account of the "mal'aria" until after the first frost — or, as we should say to-day, until the cold weather had killed the mosquitoes. The other road was a little shorter, but very hilly. Severn does not mention the Pontine Marshes, but, as the road which crossed them was much the most used and November was well past the malaria season, I assume it to have been the one taken.

Severn's account of the journey shows how very exhausted Keats was. The weather seems to have cleared up, but the poor food was a severe tax on Keats's disordered stomach, and the confinement in the little carriage, together with the jolting, must have caused him much suffering. Severn, who walked most of the time, reached Rome considerably stronger than when he left England, but he has no such good report to give of Keats. He is writing long afterwards, yet we can see that his words are

less highly coloured by the passage of time than was usual with him:

> [1] "Keats, on the other hand, had become very listless, and seldom seemed even relatively happy, except when an unusually fine prospect opened before us, or the breeze bore to us exquisite hill fragrances or breaths from the distant blue seas, and particularly when I literally filled the little carriage with flowers. He never tired of these, and they gave him a singular and almost fantastic pleasure that was at times almost akin to a strange joy. But there was nothing sufficiently out of the common to impress us till we reached the Campagna, whose vast billowy wastes, Keats said, were like an inland ocean, only more monotonous than that we had lately left."

Crossing the Campagna, the young men came upon a strange sight: a Cardinal, in a large crimson cloak, accompanied by two footmen in livery, shooting song birds by the aid of an owl tied to a stick. To the owl was fastened a small mirror which glittered as the owl moved, and this glittering served to attract the little birds who were flying about in scores. "The whole merit of this sport," says Severn, "seemed to be in not shooting the owl." The footmen kept loading the Cardinal's fowling-pieces, and, continues Severn, greatly impressed, "it was astonishing the great numbers of birds he killed." Nothing could have made plainer how far away England was than this remarkable encounter.

The first view of Rome was an event, even to the sick man. "We were both much excited" Severn reports. They entered Rome by the Lateran Gate, and almost immediately saw the Colosseum, not cleaned up as it is in our day, but covered with vines, that superb and stupendous ruin rising out of a rubbish heap with which Piranesi and a host of other artists have made us familiar. Along the paved streets clattered the little carriage straight to the door of

[1] Reminiscences quoted in *Life of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp.

the right-hand house at the bottom of the steps leading from the Piazza di Spagna to the Trinità dei Monti, where Dr. Clark had taken lodgings for them on the first floor. Dr. Clark himself lived just across the square, and he had arranged for Keats to be near by in order that he might have him constantly under observation.

Dr. (afterwards Sir James) Clark was a Scotchman, and at the time he undertook the care of Keats a comparatively young man of thirty-two. He had begun life by reading law, but had soon given it up in favour of surgery. In 1809, he became a member of the College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, and immediately entered the navy as an assistant surgeon. At the end of the war with France, he was put on half-pay, and at once returned to Edinburgh and began to study medicine at the University. He received his degree in 1817, and the following year went to Switzerland in charge of a consumptive patient. While there, he began to collect data on the effects of climate upon phthisis. In 1819, he settled in Rome, and here he stayed, going to Germany in the Summers in pursuit of his climatic studies, until 1826, when he moved to London where Prince Leopold made him his private physician. In 1834, the Prince induced the Duchess of Kent to give him a similar post in her household, and on Queen Victoria's succeeding to the throne he was appointed her physician in ordinary, and before the year was out found himself a baronet. So far Clark's life had been as smooth as oil, but a false diagnosis, on account of which an unmarried lady's character was badly, and most unjustly, besmirched, ruined his practice in spite of the continued patronage of the court. He was noted for his conciliatory manner, and the care he took to disguise the taste of unpleasant drugs. He made no addition to medical knowledge, but served commendably in various official capacities and on several royal commissions. In 1860, he gave up practice and retired to Bagshot Park, which was lent him by the queen. He died in 1870.



KEATS'S LODGING IN THE PIAZZA DI SPAGNA, ROME

From a photograph taken by Miss Margaret Shepard

Society knew of the case of Lady Flora Hastings, but we know of the case of John Keats and it is painful in the extreme. Everything that ignorance could blunder into, every mistake of practice which could be made, were done and made with the best possible intentions by Dr. Clark. He meant well, but the tale is heart-rending. A perfectly just summing up of him is, I think, that he was a poor doctor, with a kindly heart and a pleasant bedside manner.

Who gave Keats his introduction to Dr. Clark, I have been unable to discover. Taylor, writing in February to George Keats,[1] speaks of him as "a very eminent English physician to whom providentially we were able personally to recommend him." Two extracts of letters from Clark, and one original letter, were among certain papers bought by me long ago. The collection is evidently from Woodhouse's or Taylor's store of documents. The only one of these Clark letters with a beginning, the holograph, is addressed to "My dear Gray." Who this Gray was, I cannot find out, possibly Samuel Edward Gray, author of a *Supplement to the Pharmacopœia* published in 1818. As a well-known pharmacologist, and contributor to the *Medical Repository*, Gray would very likely have known both Dr. Clark and Dr. Darling, and may possibly have served as the bridge between the two. Taylor's intimacy with Dr. Darling I have already mentioned,[2] and any introduction received through Darling would, without doubt, in Taylor's estimation, have justified the inclusive "we." The first of these extracts is from a letter written very soon after Keats's arrival in Rome. It is a copy merely, made from the original letter; there is no signature, but the paper is headed "Extract of a letter from Dr. Clark."

"Rome Nov. 27 1820

Keats arrived here about a week ago & I have got him into comfortable lodgings. I can hardly yet give you a

[1] Unpublished Letter. Author's Collection. [2] See Vol. II, p. 422.

decided opinion of his case but will in my next. The chief part of his disease, as far as I can yet see seems seated in his Stomach. I have some suspicion of disease of the heart and it may be of the lungs, but of this say nothing to his friends as in my next I shall be able to give you something more satisfactory. His mental exertions and application have I think been the sources of his complaint — If I can put his mind at ease I think he'll do well — get Mr. Taylor or some of his friends to write him. I'm afraid the Idea of his expenses operates on his mind and some plan must be adopted to remove this if possible. The truth is having come abroad for the purpose of restoring his health, every thing must be done to favor the change of climate — I mean that he shall buy or hire by the month a horse to ride out whenever the weather permits & so forth — After all his expenses will be simple, and he's too noble an animal to be allowed to sink without some sacrifice being made to save him. I wish I were rich enough his living here should cost him nothing. He has a friend with him who seems very attentive to him but between you & I is not the best suited for his companion, but I suppose poor fellow he had no choice. I fear much there is something operating on his mind — at least so it appears to me — he either feels that he is now living at the expense of some one else or something of that kind. If my opinion be correct we may throw medicine to the dogs. Let everything be done to relieve his mind from any Idea of that kind as far as possible — I feel very much interested in him and believe me will do everything in my power to be of service to him. I am glad to find the Edinburgh Reviews have been just towards him. He seems much pleased with Rome and prefers it greatly to Naples."

Dr. Clark's diagnosis was singularly inadequate as regards Keats's physical state, but he showed considerable cleverness in so quickly apprehending his mental condition. His prescription of a horse to ride was at once followed. Keats got a horse and rode at a snail's pace in the Pincio and even along the banks of the Tiber beyond the Porta del

Popolo. He also walked, or rather strolled, about Rome, but by Dr. Clark's orders eschewed all sight-seeing.

Clark, finding that Severn's only letter of introduction was to the sculptor Canova, promptly gave him another to an English sculptor, John Gibson. Gibson was polite, and Keats, on hearing the tale of the visit from Severn, was most urgent to have his friend begin his picture for the Royal Academy's Travelling Scholarship Competition at once. Severn demurred a little, on the plea that painting would take him too much away from Keats and that there would be time for that later when Keats should be better, whereupon Keats told him frankly that his having been awarded the gold medal for his *Cave of Despair* had made him an object of jealousy in various quarters. To point his moral, Keats informed him of a circumstance which had happened the Winter before. Keats had been somewhere in company with Hilton and three other artists when Severn's picture, and the justness of the award, were mentioned. One of the painters began to run down the picture, declaring that Severn had tried many times for the medal and failed, and that it had been given him this time out of pity. Keats, a thorough partizan always as well as a loyal friend, had rushed into the breach and pronounced the thing an insufferable lie, saying that he knew Severn well and had seen the picture which was quite worthy of its success. The painters were probably not greatly impressed by Keats's opinion of the painting, but the fact that Severn had not before tried for the medal, and that he had received it in the usual way, was attested to by another of those present. Keats was so incensed at such a slander being current that he had left the party forthwith in high dudgeon. By telling all this to Severn, Keats won the argument, and Severn set to work on a preliminary sketch of a picture, the subject of which was to be the death of Alcibiades.

Severn's absence threw Keats upon his own resources,

but not for long. He made the acquaintance of a certain Lieutenant Isaac Marmaduke Elton, a quondam First Lieutenant of the Royal Engineers, now, like Keats, a consumptive, sojourning in Rome for his health. The Pincian Hill was then, as now, one of the chief promenades in Rome, and here Keats and Lieutenant Elton used often to walk. Pauline Bonaparte, Princess Borghese, was not infrequently among the promenaders. Lieutenant Elton was a tall, good-looking man, and his figure and address were soon noticed by the famous beauty, who fell into the habit of greeting him with melting and provocative glances. This so rasped Keats's nerves, to whom any reminder of sex at the moment was extremely bitter, that he and Elton gave up going to the Pincio and thereafter walked elsewhere. Canova had just finished his remarkable nude statue of Pauline Bonaparte, and the three young men went to see it. Severn reports that they considered it "beautiful bad taste," and that Keats gave it the unforgettable name of "The Æolian Harp."

Keats really seemed to be better, and Severn became very hopeful. Keats even began talking again about his poem on the story of Sabrina, and he expressed a desire to have Severn play to him. A piano was hired, and Dr. Clark procured some music, of which Severn particularly remembers Haydn's Symphonies. Keats delighted in them, and, says Severn, "would exclaim enthusiastically, 'This Haydn is like a child, for there is no knowing what he will do next.'"

During the first days in Rome, the friends, who talked no Italian and must have appeared to the astute Romans as eminently proper subjects for fleecing, were abominably served by the *trattoria* which had contracted to send in their meals. Expostulations produced no effect, but one day, when the dinner sent in was even worse than usual, Keats emptied the dishes one by one out of the window in full view of the man who had brought it, ending by point-

ing to the basket as a hint to the porter to take it away. From that moment, Keats and Severn had nothing more to complain of on the score of food.

Walking and riding could not take up the whole of Keats's time, and for the rest he read English and Italian. Once when he was reading Alfieri's poems, he suddenly threw down the volume, the lines:

> "Misera me! sollievo a me non resta
> Altro che'l pianto, ed il pianto è diletto"

were too poignant and too personal; he could read no more.

In this Indian Summer period, he again wrote to Brown, the last letter of his we know of, perhaps the last he ever wrote. The letter, although it shows Keats still extremely depressed and not feeling as much improved in health as Severn believed, is nevertheless not nearly so desperate as the ones from the "Maria Crowther" and from Naples. There is the least grain of hope in it, so small that it can hardly be detected, but there notwithstanding. Its presence was a cruel deception — particularly cruel since it was so difficult for Keats to hope — yet it was very natural. Dr. Clark was kind, attentive, and encouraging. There seemed to be an improvement. Here is the letter:

"Rome, 30 November 1820.

MY DEAR BROWN,

'Tis the most difficult thing in the world to me to write a letter. My stomach continues so bad, that I feel it worse on opening any book, — yet I am much better than I was in quarantine. Then I am afraid to encounter the pro-ing and con-ing of anything interesting to me in England. I have an habitual feeling of my real life having passed, and that I am leading a posthumous existence. God knows how it would have been — but it appears to me — however, I will not speak of that subject. I must have been at Bedhampton nearly at the time you were writing to me from Chichester — how unfortunate — and to pass on the

river too! There was my star predominant. I cannot answer anything in your letter, which followed me from Naples to Rome, because I am afraid to look it over again. I am so weak (in mind) that I cannot bear the sight of any handwriting of a friend I love so much as I do you. Yet I ride the little horse, and, at my worst, even in quarantine, summoned up more puns, in a sort of desperation, in one week than in any year of my life. There is one thought enough to kill me; I have been well, healthy, alert, &c., walking with her, and now — the knowledge of contrast, feeling for light and shade, all that information (primitive sense) necessary for a poem, are great enemies to the recovery of the stomach. There, you rogue, I put you to the torture; but you must bring your philosophy to bear, as I do mine, really, or how should I be able to live? Dr. Clark is very attentive to me; he says, there is very little the matter with my lungs, but my stomach, he says is very bad. I am well disappointed in hearing good news from George, for it runs in my head we shall all die young. I have not written to Reynolds yet, which he must think very neglectful; being anxious to send him a good account of my health, I have delayed it from week to week. If I recover, I will do all in my power to correct the mistakes made during sickness; and if I should not, all my faults will be forgiven. Severn is very well, though he leads so dull a life with me. Remember me to all friends and tell Haslam I should not have left London without taking leave of him, but from being so low in body and mind. Write to George as soon as you receive this, and tell him how I am, as far as you can guess; and also a note to my sister — who walks about my imagination like a ghost — she is so like Tom. I can scarcely bid you good-bye, even in a letter. I always made an awkward bow.

God bless you!
JOHN KEATS."

Keats probably got his information about George from a letter written from Louisville on June eighteenth,[1] which must have arrived in London after he had sailed and been

[1] Author's Collection.

forwarded to him. It contained no remittance, but many expressions of sympathy for John, he having just received Brown's epistle of March. The "good news" seems to have consisted of the facts that his little girl, who had been very ill while he was in England, had not died, and that he had a good prospect of soon selling his shares in a boat, which, when it happened, would enable him to send two hundred pounds to John immediately.

Which of the three letters to Brown given in this chapter was the one that Brown wished to publish in his proposed biography,[1] there is no means of telling; but from his declaring the letter to be "of the most painful description," I suppose it was either the one written on board the "Maria Crowther" or the one sent from Naples. In either case, considering its purport and revelations, one cannot but realize how improper and unfeeling the suggestion of giving it publicity must have seemed to Fanny Brawne, even though her name were suppressed.

The comparative calm was of brief duration. On Sunday, December tenth, Keats had a severe hæmorrhage, which was followed by others on successive days. To the hæmorrhages was added a very high fever.

Four days after the relapse, on Thursday, December fourteenth, Severn wrote to Brown. The letter is quoted, with some slight changes, in Sharp's *Life of Severn*, and there it is printed as being to Mrs. Brawne, but I have a contemporary copy of it which is in the same collection of letters that contains those from Dr. Clark, and the copy is distinctly to Brown. In the last paragraph, there is a message to Mrs. Brawne: "I will write to Mr. Taylor on the next change in my friend, and to the kind Mrs. Brawne when I have any good news. Will you remember me to this lady — Little did I dream on THIS when I saw her last in London." If Severn had been writing to Mrs. Brawne on the same day that he was writing to Brown, he would

[1] See Vol. II, p. 425.

scarcely have sent this message; and he obviously could not have sent it in a letter to Mrs. Brawne herself. The letter to Brown is as follows:

"Rome Dec. 14, 1820

MY DEAR BROWN

I fear our poor Keats is at his worst. — a most unlooked for relapse has confined him to his bed — with every chance against him: — it has been so sudden upon what I almost thought convalescence — and without any seeming cause that I cannot calculate on the next change. I dread it, for his suffering is so great, so continued, and his fortitude so completely gone, that any further change must make him delirious. This is the fifth day and I see him get worse, but stop — I will tell you the manner of this relapse from the first.

Dec. 17 — 4 — morning. Not a moment can I be from him — I sit by his bed and read all day — and at night I humour him in all his wanderings. he has fallen asleep — the first for 8 nights, and now from mere exhaustion. I hope he will not wake until I have written this, for I am anxious beyond measure to have you know this worse and worse state — yet I dare not let him see I think it dangerous. — I had seen him wake on the morning of this attack, and to all appearances he was going on merrily and had unusual good spirits — when in an instant a Cough seized him and he vomited near two Cup-fuls of blood. — In a moment I got Dr. Clarke, who saw the manner of it, and immediately took away about 8 ounces of blood from the Arm — it was black and thick in the extreme. Keats was much alarmed and dejected — O what an awful day I had with him! — he rush'd out of bed and said 'this day shall be my last' — and but for me most certainly it would. At the risk of losing his confidence I took every destroying means from his reach, nor let him be from my sight one minute. The blood broke forth again in like quantity the next morning — and the doctor thought it expedient to take away the like quantity of blood — This was in the same dismal state, and must have been from the horrible state of despair he was in — but I was so fortunate as to

talk him into a little calmness, and with some English newspapers he became quite patient under the necessary arrangements.

This is the 9th day, and no change for the better — five times the blood has come up in coughing in large quantities generally in the morning . . . but this is the lesser evil when compared with his Stomach — not a single thing will digest — the torture he suffers all and every night — and best part of the day — is dreadful in the extreme — the distended stomach keeps him in perpetual hunger or craving — and this is augmented by the little nourishment he takes to keep down the blood — Then his mind is worse than all — despair in every shape — his imagination and memory present every image in horror so strong that morning and night I tremble for his Intellect. The recollection of England — of his 'good friend Brown' — and his happy few weeks in Mrs. Brawne's care — his sister and brother — O he will mourn over every circumstance to me whilst I cool his burning forehead — until I tremble through every vein in concealing my tears from his staring glassy eyes. — How he can be Keats again from all this I have little hope — but I may see it too gloomy since each coming night I sit up adds its dismal contents to my mind.

Dr. Clarke will not say so much — although there is no bounds to his attention, yet with little success — 'Can he administer to a mind diseased' — yet all that can be done most kindly he does — whilst his Lady, like himself in refined feeling, prepares and cooks all that poor Keats takes — for in this wilderness of a place (for an Invalid) there is no alternative. Yesterday Dr. Clarke went all over Rome after a certain kind of fish, and got it — but just as I received it from Mrs. C. delicately prepared, Keats was taken by the spitting of blood and is now gone back all the 9 days. — this was occasioned by disobeying the Doctor's commands. — Keats is required to be kept as low as possible to check the blood — so that he is weak and gloomy. — Every day he raves that he will die from hunger — and I was obliged to give him more than allowed. You cannot think how dreadful this is for me — the Doctor on the one hand tells me I shall kill him to give him

more than he allows — and Keats raves for more till I am in a complete tremble for him. But I have talked him over now. — We have the best opinion of Dr. C's skill — he seems to understand the case, and comes over 4 & 5 times a day — he left word at 12 this morning to call any time in case of danger.

I heard Keats say how he should like Mrs. Brawne and Mrs. Dilk to visit his sister at Walthamstow — will you say this for me — and to Mr. Taylor that Keats was about to write favorably on the very time of his relapse — For myself I am keeping up beyond my most sanguine expectations — 8 nights I have been up, and in the days never a moment away from my patient but to run over to the Doctor — but I will confess my spirits have been sometimes quite pulled down — for these wretched Romans have no idea of comfort — here I am obliged to wash up — cook — & read to Keats all day . . . I wrote last to my good friend Haslam — it will tell you all the events up to the relapse of Keats — I had put the letters in post on the same morning — it was my custom to walk until Keats awoke — we did breakfast about 9 o'clock . . .

Will you, my dear Brown, write to me — for a letter to Keats now would almost kill him — give Haslam this sad news. — I am quite exhausted — farewell — I wish you were here my dear Brown

Sincerely

JOSEPH SEVERN

I have just looked at him — this will be a good night."

The reason for the diary form of Severn's letters was that the English post went out only once a week. This letter seems to have been concluded on Monday, December eighteenth.

The starvation diet to which Keats was reduced was at one time so meagre that his daily allowance consisted of one anchovy and a small piece of toast. If Dr. Clark said little, it was because he thought so much. Severn, we see, had not yet lost all hope, and naturally Dr. Clark did not wish to discourage him. What Dr. Clark's real opinion

was, we see by this passage from one of his letters, apparently to the same correspondent to whom he had first written:

[1] "Rome, Jan. 3

In my last I said a few words about poor Keats. Since that date he has had another attack of bleeding from the lungs which has weakened him greatly, and he is now in a most deplorable state — his stomach is ruined and the state of his mind is the worst possible for one in his condition, and will undoubtedly hurry on an event that I fear is not far distant and even in the best frame of mind would not probably be long protracted. His digestive Organs are sadly deranged, and his lungs are also diseased — either of these would be a great evil, but to have both under the state of mind which he unfortunately is in must soon kill him. I fear he has long been governed by his imagination & feelings and now has little power & less inclination to keep them under. I feel much interested in the poor fellow indeed — it is most distressing to see a mind like his (what it might have been) in the deplorable state in which it is. His friend Mr. Severn is most attentive to him. Were Christianity of no use but to give tranquillity to the sick bed it were the greatest blessing on earth. I am sorry indeed, and much disappointed in having to communicate such sad accounts of poor K. When I saw him I thought something might be done, but now I fear the prospect is a hopeless one —"

January third was a Wednesday, and by the following Monday or Tuesday a very slight improvement had taken place in Keats's condition. It was infinitesimal, but enough to start Severn's volatile temperament hoping again. On Thursday, January eleventh, bethinking him of his promise to let Mrs. Brawne know of any alteration for the better, he sat down and wrote her a letter. This letter, from which I shall give quotations only, is not merely important for the information it gives of Keats's condition, but for the light it throws on Severn's character. An early

[1] Copy in Author's Collection.

paragraph shows us as much of Keats's state of mind as Severn was capable of comprehending, and also reveals the light-hearted simplicity with which Severn had undertaken the journey:

> [1] "I most certainly think I shall bring him back to England — at least my anxiety for his recovery and comfort make me think this — for half the cause of his danger has arisen from the loss of England — from the dread of never seeing it more. O this hung upon him like a torture — never may I behold the like again even in my direst enemy — Little did I think what a task of affliction & danger I had undertaken, for I only thought of the beautiful mind of Keats my attachment to him — and his convalescence."

The facts which gave Severn his renewed hope seem slim enough. This is his relation of them:

> "But I will tell you my dear Madam the singular reason I have for hoping his recovery — In the first violence of this attack his memory presented to him every thing that was dear & delightful — even to the minutiæ — and with it all the persecution & I may say villainy practised upon him — his exquisite sensibility for everyone save his poor self — all his own means & comfort expended upon others — almost in vain — These he would contrast with his present suffering — & say that all was brought on by them — and he was right. Now he has changed to calmness & quietude as singular as productive of good for his mind was certainly killing him. He has now given up all thoughts hopes or even wish for recovery — His mind is in a state of peace from the final leave he has taken of this world and all its future hopes. this has been an immense weight for him to rise from. He remains quiet & submissive under his heavy fate.
>
> Now if anything will recover him it is this absence of himself. I have perceived for the last 3 days symptoms of recovery — Dr. Clarke even thinks so — nature again revives in him — I mean where art was used before —

[1] From a contemporary copy of the letter. Author's Collection.

Yesterday he permitted me to carry him from his bed room to our sitting room — to put him clean things on, and to talk about my Painting to him — This is my good news — Don't think it otherwise my dear Madam, for I have been in such a state of anxiety & discomforture in this barbarous place that the least hope of my friends recovery is a heaven to me.

For three weeks I have never left him I have sat up at night — I have read to him nearly all day & even in the night — I light the fire, make his breakfast & sometimes am obliged to cook — make his bed and even sweep the room. I can have these things done, but never at the time when they ought & must be done — so that you will see my alternative — What enrages me most is making the fire. I blow — blow — for an hour — the smoke comes fuming out — my kettle falls over on the burning sticks — no stove — Keats calling me to be with him — the fire catching my hands & the door bell ringing — all these to one quite unused and not at all capable — with the want of every proper material come not a little galling —"

The letter goes on to tell of two new difficulties which were giving Severn a great deal of trouble. The first was brought about by the landlady of the apartment, who had notified the police that a man with consumption was dying in her house. Long before the English doctors had found out that tuberculosis was a contagious disease, the Italians were convinced of the fact, and by their law everything in the room occupied by a tuberculous patient, even to the very wall-paper, must, after his death, be burnt. Now both Severn and Dr. Clark thought it would cheer Keats up to move him from his bed-room to the sofa in the sitting-room for a few hours. In the sitting-room were his and Severn's few books, the hired piano, Severn's painting materials, in short everything of value which the friends possessed. All these things would be destroyed if it came to the knowledge of the police that Keats had been carried into the room. The landlady's private quarters being on

the same floor made discovery a hard thing to evade, but somehow Severn managed it, even going so far as to sweep Keats's bed-room in order to avoid calling the maid, and going without his dinner that Keats might think him dining when he was really sweeping.

The second difficulty was the looming up of possible financial complications. Keats, it will be remembered, had a credit at Taylor and Hessey's of one hundred and fifty pounds. The unknown "Brown Esq" seems to have arranged that this money should be paid through the medium of the well-known Roman bankers, Torlonia and Company. On their advice, Keats had drawn one hundred and twenty pounds on his first draft, an amount which seriously nettled somebody at home, either "Brown Esq" or Taylor and Hessey themselves. Severn asks Mrs. Brawne to write and explain matters to Taylor. But this was only the beginning of the trouble, as we shall see. Severn's letter ended by saying:

> "present my respectful Compliments to Miss Brawne who I hope & trust is quite well — now that I think of her my mind is carried to your happy Wentworth Place — O, I would my unfortunate friend had never left it — for the hopeless disadvantage of this comfortless Italy — he has many many times talked over the few happy days at your House — the only time when his mind was at ease. I hope still to see him with you again — farewell my dear Madam. One more thing I must say — poor Keats cannot see any letters — at least he will not — they affect him so much and increase his danger — The two last I repented giving — he made me put them into his box unread. more of this when I write again — meanwhile any matter of moment had better come to me — I will be very happy to receive advice & remembrances from you — once more farewell."

The difficulty about the letter-of-credit was a very real and a very unpleasant one. Taylor had never expected to

have to meet the payments on it with his own, or the firm's, money. He was in daily expectation of remittances from George, which George was totally unable to send. He seems to have delayed to honour the large draft from Rome until such representations reached him from there as made it impossible for him to hold off longer. The dire state in which things were, was forced upon his attention by Mrs. Brawne, and very likely also by Haslam, and finally by Dr. Clark himself. Clark's letter[1] to the unknown Gray could not be withstood. It made matters very clear, both as to money affairs and to Keats's hopeless condition. Clark says:

"Rome January 13th 1821.

"I have not lost a Post, My dear Gray, in replying to your letter relative to p[oor Kea]ts as I am anxio[us] to prevent any [fu]rther misunderstanding o[n] the Bill affair; I say misunderstanding beca[use] it appears to me that there has been something of this kind either on Keats part or that of his friend Mr. Severn. The truth I am sorry to inform you is that Keats is at present so ill that he must know nothing of the matter, and therefore his particular motives for deviating from Mr. Taylors instructions, or whether he quite understood these, cannot now be understood, and perhaps it matters not much as things stand relative to the Bill. His friend informs m[e that] it was proposed by the Banker that instead of draw[ing] the stipulated sum in small Bills it should be [all drawn] at once, as incurring less expense, and the money [draw]n from him according as it was required. [This] plan as you know was adopted & about half the su[m] & rather more has already been drawn fr[om the ba]nker & the greater part of this sum spent. T[his bei]ng the case the Banker (Torlonia) to who[m] I explained the whole matter advises, as the plan [in]curring the least expense, that th[e] Bill sho[uld] be paid off when due and that he will [re]tain [th]e money now in his hands as the proper[ty of] Taylor &c. till he receives information author[izing him] to pay it to Mr. Keats. This appears to

[1] Unpublished letter from Dr. Clark. Author's Collection. This letter is badly torn, but it has been possible to make out most of the mutilated words by the parts of them which remain.

me also [the best] plan to arrange the matter; do you then ex[plain matte]rs to Mr. Taylor or Mr. Cowie and write to me, or [the ban]ker here without delay a[s] until he receives inf[ormation] directly or thro' me he will not let Mr. Keats have [any mon]ey. Keats however in his present state[1]

nor must he know anything of the matter, as it would answer no good purpose and might add great[ly] to his present suffering to know that he ha[d done any]thing to displease gentlemen that hav[e t]reated [him] so kindly. Write me therefore as soon as you have explained the matter to Mr. Taylor and in [t]he meantime I will take [on m]e, if Keats is in want of anything, that it shall be supplied. — Poor fellow he is now so ill as to be constantly confined to bed, his stomach is still in a very bad state, the affection of his lungs is increasing and the state of his mind is the most deplorable possible — under such melancholy circumstances amendment I fear is scarcely to be looked for, recovery almost out of the question. His friend Mr. Severn is most [atten]tive to him indeed scarcely [ever leaves] him. [His lo]dgings are pretty comfortable & I do not b[elieve he] would have a better chance of recovery any[where] else unless it were among friends who had the power [of] calming his mind — He has no religion — he has been [ro]bbed of that — & philosophy I fear is seldom su[fficient] to produce tranquillity of mind under su[ch sad circum]stances as he is placed — his certainly is not sufficient. Pray when you write tell me if it was c[onsum]ption his brother died of.

I have now my [dear Gr]ay explained to you the whole of th[e Bill a]ffair and the melancholy situati[on of poor] Keats who in my opinion will ne[ver leav]e Rome."

The rest of the letter is too fragmentary to read. It had the effect of making Taylor send prompt advices to pay to Torlonia. But this was not all. It opened Taylor's eyes to two very patent facts: one was that Keats was certainly dying; the other that, until he died, he would continue to need money. By this time, Taylor had begun to lose hope

[1] The letter is torn here.

in help coming from George. He, himself, could afford nothing more, and, in order to supply Keats, he took the only course open to him, he set on foot a subscription among Keats's friends and well-wishers. Lord Fitzwilliam gave fifty pounds, and Rice, the painters Hilton and Dewint, Bonsor, and Percival gave ten pounds each.[1] With this money a farther credit of one hundred pounds was assured to Keats.

The knowledge that Keats was actually upon his death-bed was a final blow to all Taylor's hopes in regard to him. There would be no more poems, as he realized only too well. No future chances of success as the publisher of new books by Keats was possible, and this inescapable fact caused Taylor to do a cruel and unjust thing. He sent a demand note to George for the whole one hundred and fifty pounds of the first letter-of-credit.[2] He had no legal right whatever to do such a thing as he knew perfectly well, so well that he wrote to his cousin, Michael Drury of Philadelphia,[3] to enforce his action by means of a threat of publicity should George refuse. And this was not all. He suggested — nay, urged — that George should refund the money subscribed by the gentlemen from whom he had begged it. Whether Rice, Hilton, and the other ten-pound subscribers, considered their subscriptions in the light of a loan, we do not know, but it seems quite certain that Lord Fitzwilliam cannot have had any such idea. What Taylor did not tell George or Drury was that he was raising money for Clare at this same time, and that Lord Fitzwilliam had divided his bounty between the two poets, according to what he believed their respective needs, giving Clare one hundred pounds and Keats fifty. Later, after Keats's death, we find Taylor telling Wood-

[1] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.

[2] Unpublished letter from Taylor to George Keats. February 17, 1821. Author's Collection.

[3] Unpublished letter from Taylor to Michael Drury. February 19, 1821. Author's Collection.

house that this "Advance, or Loan or Gift" of Lord Fitzwilliam's, and the "gift" of the other five gentlemen "deserves to be mentioned to Abby, who may do as he pleases about it."[1] George did not honour this note at the time it was sent, but eventually he paid the full amount. In spite of the unworthy and indecent haste in which Taylor tried to collect from George, his kindness to John suffered no diminution. In the letter to Drury, he says of the new letter-of-credit: "John has been advised of this further advance being ready, tho' not of the way in which it has been raised, for that would destroy him at once," and he says practically the same thing to George.

Reynolds is rather oddly missing from Taylor's list of subscribers. It seems, however, that he did lay aside fifty pounds for Keats's use, if he should ever need it, but with characteristic inadvertence never sent the draft.

It must have been early in January that a letter arrived for Keats from Brown, written on December twenty-first, in answer to Keats's letter of November thirtieth. I do not believe that Keats ever saw this letter. I hope he did not, for in the very beginning Brown wrote:

> [2] "And so you still wish me to follow you to Rome? and truly I wish to go; nothing detains me but prudence. Little could be gained, if anything, by letting my house at this time of the year, and the consequence would be a heavy additional expense which I cannot possibly afford, unless it were a matter of necessity, and I see none while you are in such good hands as Severn's . . . Thank God, you are getting better!"

The rest of the letter is full of chit-chat and gossip, calculated to amuse a convalescing man, but the bitterest possible irony for any one in Keats's desperate state to read. For the brief respite which had so encouraged Severn was of the shortest duration. Hardly had Severn posted his

[1] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.
[2] Quoted in *Life of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp.

letter to Mrs. Brawne before the distressing symptoms returned with even greater violence. Severn tells the despairing story of Keats's long lingering, and the unfortunate exterior circumstances, which Keats did not know, but which were a terrible anxiety to Severn, in a letter to Haslam, dated "Sunday night ½ past 11 —" and again "Rome Jan. 15, 1821." January fifteenth was a Monday, so that the letter was probably begun on Sunday and finished on Monday:

[1] "MY DEAR HASLAM

Poor Keats has just fallen asleep — I have watched him and read to him to his very last wink — he has been saying to me, 'Severn I can see under your quiet look immense twisting & contending — you don't know what you are reading — you are enduring for me more than I'll have you. O that my last hour was come — What is it that puzzles you now — what is it happens?' — I tell him that nothing happens nothing worries me beyond his seeing that it has been the dull day — getting from myself to his recovery — and then my painting — and then England — and then — but they are all lies — my heart almost leaps to deny them — for I have the veriest load of care that ever came upon these shoulders of mine — For Keats is sinking daily — he is dying of a consumption — of a confirmed consumption — perhaps another three weeks may lose me him for ever — this alone would break down the most gallant spirit — I had made sure of his recovery when I set out — I was selfish and thought of his value to me, and made a point of my future success depend on his candor to me — this is not all — I have prepared myself to bear this now — now that I must & should have seen it before — but Torlonia the banker has refused any more money — The bill has returned unaccepted 'no effects' and I tomorrow must — Aye must pay the last solitary crown for this cursed lodging place — yet more — should our unfortunate friend die, all the furniture will be burnt — beds — sheets curtains, and even the walls must be

[1] From a contemporary copy of Severn's letter. Author's Collection.

scraped, and these devil will come upon me for 100£ or 150£ the making good — but above all, this noble fellow, lying in the bed, is dying in horror, — no kind hope smoothing down his suffering, no philosophy — no religion to support him — yet with all the most gnawing desire for it — yet without the possibility of receiving it — It is not from any religious principles I feel this, but from the individual suffering of his mind in this point — I would not care from what source — so he could understand his misfortunes and glide into his lot — O my dear Haslam, this is my greatest care — a care that I pray to God may soon end — For he says in words that tear my very heart strings — 'Miserable wretch I am, — this last cheap comfort, which every rogue and fool has, is deny'd me in my last moments — yet why is this? O, I have served everyone with my utmost good yet why is this — I can't understand this —' and then his chattering teeth — if I do break down it will be under this — but I pray that some kind of comfort may come to his lot — that some Angel of goodness will lead him through this dark wilderness.

Now Haslam, what do you think of my situation — for I know not what may come with tomorrow — I am hedg'd in every way that you can look at me — If I could leave Keats for a while every day I could soon raise money by my face painting but he will not let me out of his sight — he cannot bear the face of a stranger — he has made me go out twice & leave him solus — I'd rather cut my tongue out than tell him money I must get — that would kill him at a word — I will not do any thing that may add to his misery — for I have tried on every point to leave him for a few hours in a day but he won't unless he is left alone — This won't do — nor shall not for another minute while he is John Keats...

I read — cook — make the beds — and do all the menial offices — for no soul comes near Keats except the Doctor and myself...

I have got a volume of Jeremy Taylors works which Keats has heard me read to night — this is a treasure, and came when I thought it hopeless — and may not other good things come? and even money — I will still keep myself up with the best hope.

> Dr. Clark is still the same altho' he has rec'd notice about this bill. I have said to him that if Keats is wanting in any possible thing now that would give him ease, but would be out of his agreement, or at least fears the payment for, I will be answerable for it in any way he may think fit — but no — he does his every thing. . .
>
> I wrote by last post to Mrs. Brawne — I think she should know these — but it will be a severe blow — see Brown too —"

At this point, Severn gives a minute description of Keats's symptoms which it is not necessary to repeat; they are those common to all tuberculous patients in the last stages. He continues:

> "Keats sees all this — his knowledge of anatomy makes it tenfold worse at every change — every way he is unfortunate — I cannot see him turn any way without something to dash the cup from his lip. . . Poor Keats cannot read any letters — he has made me put 2 by unopened — they tear him to pieces — he dare not look upon the outside of any more — make this known — and should any communication be required to make let it come to me — I will frame it to his ear — he places the greatest confidence in me."

We know, from the letters to Fanny Brawne of the previous Summer, that Keats's anguish at his inability to accept the doctrines of Christianity was because of his longing to believe in a life after death. If he could only become convinced that he and Fanny Brawne were not to be parted forever, death would lose its sharpest agony. He let Severn read Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying* to him, and he made no objection to Severn's praying beside him, but there is no reason whatever to suppose that he found the consolation for which he was seeking. Indeed, ten days later he could not bear to be read to at all. Severn wrote to Taylor on Thursday, January twenty-fifth, giving farther accounts of the progress of the disease, after which he continues:

[1] "Yet from all this he might get up if he would bear over that intense feeling — and those unfortunate combinations and passions of mind — from which no medicine in the world can relieve him — nor any other man — for they are a part of his nature — It now quite astonishes me that he has lived so long without the almost essence of human-life — I mean that sometimes calm of mind to keep the machinery of the body going — This I am certain poor Keats never possessed or even felt. He has described to me many parts of his life — of various changes — but all moving to this restless ferment — no doubt all the emotions of his mind even to his happiest sensations — have brought him to this dreary point — from which I pray God speedily to lift him up — his suffering now is beyond description — and it increases with increasing acuteness of his memory and imagination — his nerves will not bear the only illusory comfort from things that 'smell of mortality' — and to any other source he has still greater horror — he cannot bear any books — the fact is he cannot bear anything — his state is so irritable — is so every way unfortunate — that I begin to sink under the very seeing him — without the labour — without the want of rest and occupation I shall be ill from this cause alone. — The hardest point between us is that cursed unused bottle of Opium — he had determined on taking this the instant his recovery should stop — he says to save him the extended misery of a long illness — in his own mind he saw this fatal prospect — the dismal nights — the impossibility of receiving any sort of comfort — and above all the wasting of his body and [2] — these he had determined on escaping — and but for me — he would have swallowed this draught 3 months since in the ship — he says 3 wretched months I have kept him alive — and for it — no name — no treatment — no privations can be too bad for me. I cannot reason him out of this even on his own grounds but now I fall into his views on every point — before I made every sacrifice for his personal comfort & in his own way — trying every manner to satisfy him — now I must do the

[1] Unpublished letter from Severn to Taylor. Author's Collection.
[2] This word is indecipherable.

same mentally — I even say he should have this bottle — but I have given it to Dr. Clarke — the fact is I dare not trust myself with it — so anxious I was to satisfy him in everything — Poor fellow he could not read your letter when it came — although he opened it — I did not regret it for not a syllable had I let him know about the Bill — it would have killed him — I trembled when he looked at your name — but he wept most bitterly — and gave the letter to me — Dr. Clarke has rec'd yours respecting the Bill — it is now quite right — you will have received my explanations about it — and I am once more at rest about it...

The doctor has most certainly done all that could be done — but he says Keats should never have left England — the disorder had made too great a progress to receive benefit from this Climate — He says nothing in [the] world could cure him even when he left England — by this journey his life has been shortened — and rendered more painful."

One cannot read of the taking away of the laudanum which would have spared the dying man his horrible, lingering torture, without a feeling of rage. Who were Severn and Dr. Clark to determine whether or not Keats had a right to do away with himself under the circumstances? Nothing could more certainly have prevented Keats from accepting the religion offered him than this attitude prompted by that same religion. Suicide to hasten a painful death did not figure itself to Keats as a crime; it did to the orthodox and unimaginative men in charge of him. The mercy accorded to a dog was denied to Keats in the name of religion. It is a ghastly comment on pushing a theory to its verge. It never seems to have occurred to Dr. Clark to administer a few drops of laudanum to allay the worst suffering. Such, alas! was not the treatment of the day.

On January thirtieth, while watching beside the sick bed at three o'clock in the morning, Severn made a sketch

of Keats as he slept. This sketch is so well known that I have not reproduced it, although it is the best of Severn's many portraits of Keats.

In a postscript to his letter to Taylor, Severn speaks of Keats's nervousness and extreme debility. It was now a question of having a nurse to spell Severn, which Severn feared might not work:

> "Keats is wanting to say something or have something done every minute in the day — no one to do these — he may become irritated — for I can assure [you] his mind is bordering on the insane. 11 o'clock — The doctor has just been. Nature cannot hold out another fortnight he says . . .
>
> Keats is desiring his death with dreadful earnestness — The idea of death seems his only comfort — the only possibility of ease. He talks of it with delight — it soothes his present torture — The strangeness of his mind every day surprises me — No one feeling or one notion like any other being."

At times Keats would not even attempt to eat. Once Severn made him a cup of coffee, but he threw it away; this was repeated a second time, with the same result. On Severn's appearing still a third time with more coffee, Keats was ashamed and deeply affected. Yet, throughout all these weeks, Keats's mind was occasionally capable of its old elasticity and charm. Severn, who sat up night after night, sometimes fell asleep from sheer exhaustion. Fearing that some night the candle might burn out while he slept and Keats wake in darkness, he one evening tried the experiment of fastening a thread from the bottom of one candle to the wick of another. Keats awoke just as the first candle was guttering out, and while he waited, not liking to call Severn, the thread ignited and successfully bore the flame to the second candle, at which Keats suddenly cried out, "Severn, Severn! here's a little fairy lamplighter actually lit up the other candle."

At last Severn became so worn out for want of sleep

that an English nurse was engaged to come in for two hours every other day. Keats liked her, and this slight relief enabled Severn to keep up till the end.

During this time, as little of the truth as possible was told to Fanny Brawne, who wrote and wrote, but whose letters Keats did not dare to open. Brown wrote to Severn after receiving the account of the December collapse that, on being told of it, Mrs. Brawne was greatly agitated. He was not present when Fanny was told, but said that she bore the news "with great firmness, mournfully, but without affectation," and he adds: "I understand she says to her mother, 'I believe he must soon die, and when you hear of his death, tell me immediately. I am not a fool.'" Mrs. Brawne answered Severn's hopeful letter of January eleventh very quietly and understandingly. She deeply regretted that Keats had ever left England, and said how glad she should have been to help Severn nurse him. Severn replied on Monday, February twelfth, and he told Mrs. Brawne so much, and so near the end, that I shall quote a considerable part of the letter:

[1] "I have just received your letter of the 15th — the contrast of your quiet friendly Hampstead with this lonely place and our poor suffering Keats brings the tears into my eyes. I wish many, many times that he had never left you. His recovery must have been impossible whilst he was in England, and his excessive grief since has made it more so. In your care he seems to me like an infant in its mother's arms — you would have smoothed down his pain by varieties, his death might have been eased by the sight of his many friends. But here, with one solitary friend, in a place else savage for an invalid he has had one more pang added to his many, for I have had the hardest task in keeping from him my painful situation. I have kept him alive by these means week after week. He had refused all food, but I tried him every way — I left him no excuse. Many times I have prepared his meals six times over, and kept

[1] Quoted in *Life of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp.

from him the trouble I had in doing it. I have not been able to leave him, that is, I have not dared to do it, but when he slept. Had he come here alone he would have plunged into the grave in secret — we should never have known one syllable about him. This reflection alone repays me for all I have done. It is impossible to conceive what the sufferings of this poor fellow have been. Now he is still alive and calm. If I say more I shall say too much. Yet at times I have hoped he would recover, but the Doctor shook his head, and Keats would not hear that he was better — the thought of recovery is beyond everything dreadful to him. We now dare not perceive any improvement, for the hope of death seems his only comfort. He talks of the quiet grave as the first rest he can ever have. I can believe and feel this most truly. In the last week a great desire for books came across his mind. I got him all the books at hand and for three days this charm lasted on him, but now it is gone. Yet he is very calm — he is more and more reconciled to his fortunes.

Feb. 14th. — Little or no change has taken place in Keats since the commencement of this, except this beautiful one that his mind is growing to great quietness and peace — I find this change has its rise from the increasing weakness of his body, but it seems like a delightful sleep to me. I have been beating about in the tempest of his mind so long. To-night he has talked very much to me, but so easily that he at last fell into a pleasant sleep — he seems to have comfortable dreams without nightmare. This will bring on some change — it cannot be worse, it may be better. Among the many things he has requested of me to-night, this is the principal, that on his grave shall be this —

'Here lies one whose name was writ in water.' [1]

You will understand this so well that I will not say a word about it, but is it not dreadful that he should with all his misfortunes on his mind and perhaps wrought up to

[1] Derived from Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*. Act V. Scene 3:

"... all your better deeds
Shall be in water writ."

First pointed out in *Two Epitaphs*, by Harrison S. Morris. *Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin*. Rome. No. 2.

their abisme, end his life without one jot of human happiness? . . .

Since, a letter has come. I gave it to Keats, supposing it to be one of yours, but it proved sadly otherwise. The glance of that letter tore him to pieces. The effects were on him for many days — he did not read it — he could not, but requested me to place it in his coffin together with a purse and letter (unopened) of his sister's, since which time he has requested me not to place *that letter* in his coffin, but only his sister's purse and letter with some hair. Then [?] he found many causes of his illness in the exciting and thwarting of his passions, but I persuaded him to feel otherwise on this delicate point. In his most irritable state he sees a friendless world with everything that his life presents, particularly the kindness of his friends tending to his untimely death . . . Keats says he has fretted to death — from the first drops of blood he knew he must die. He says no common chance of living was for him."

As the weakness increased, Keats became more calm. He would lie for hours holding in his hand an oval white carnelian which Fanny Brawne had given him. Severn says that "at times it seemed his only consolation, the only thing left him in this world clearly tangible." Occasionally, during the last days, he would beg Severn to go and look at the place in the English cemetery where he was to be buried, and seemed to find a comfort on being told just where it was, near the Pyramid of Caius Cestius, with violets overflowing it; he loved violets. In these last days, too, he ordered Severn to put Fanny Brawne's letters, and any other which might come from her after his death, "inside his winding-sheet on his heart." The final days shall be told as Severn told them to Taylor after the end had come:

[1] "Four days previous to his death — the change in him was so great that I passed each moment in dread — not knowing what the next would have — he was calm and

[1] Unpublished letter. Author's Collection.

> firm at its approaches — to a most astonishing degree — he told [me] not to tremble for he did not think that he should be convulsed — he said — 'did you ever see any one die' — no — 'well then I pity you poor Severn — What trouble and Danger you have got into for me — now you must be firm for it will not last long — I shall soon be laid in the quiet grave — thank God for the quiet grave — O! I can feel the cold earth upon me — the daisies growing over me — O for the quiet — it will be my first' — when the morning light came and found him still alive O how bitterly he grieved — I cannot bear his cries — Each day he would look up in the doctor's face to discover how long he should live — he would say — 'How long will this posthumous life of mine last' — that look was more than we could ever bear — the extreme brightness of his eyes with his poor pallid face — were not earthly."

On Thursday, February twenty-second, Dr. Clark prepared Severn for the worst. Severn wrote of the end in an unsent letter[1] to Brown:

> "He is gone. He died with the most perfect ease. He seemed to go to sleep. On the 23rd, Friday, at half-past four, the approach of death came on. 'Severn — I — lift me up, for I am dying. I shall die easy. Don't be frightened! Thank God it has come.' I lifted him up in my arms and the phlegm seemed boiling in his throat. This increased until eleven at night, when he gradually sank into death, so quiet, that I still thought he slept."

The next day, casts were taken of his face, hand, and foot, and on Sunday Dr. Clark, Dr. Luby, and an Italian physician, performed an autopsy. The lungs were entirely gone, the doctors could not understand how he had lived the last two months.

On Monday, a little funeral procession wound between the graves in the Protestant Cemetery. Severn, Dr. Clark, Dr. Luby, and four more. Dr. Wolff read the

[1] Quoted in *Life of Joseph Severn*, by William Sharp.

funeral service. At its close, Dr. Clark made the men put tufts of daisies on the grave, he said, "This would be poor Keats's wish, could he know it."

.

In England, a month later, Fanny Brawne wrote to Fanny Keats:

> "You will forgive me I am sure . . . that I did not write to you before, I could not for my own sake . . . for myself I am patient, resigned, very resigned. I know my Keats is happy, happier a thousand times than he could have been here, for . . . you do not, you never can know how much he suffered. So much that I do believe were it in my power I would not bring him back. All that grieves me now is that I was not with him, and so near it as I was. Some day . . . I will tell you the reason . . . and yet it was a great deal through his kindness for me for he foresaw what would happen, he at least was never deceived about his complaint, though the Doctors were ignorant and unfeeling enough to send him to that wretched country to die, for it is now known that his recovery was impossible before he left us, and he might have died here with so many friends to soothe him and me *me* with him. All we have to console ourselves with is the great joy he felt that all his misfortunes were at an end . . . The truth is I cannot very well go on at present with this, another time will tell you more . . .
>
> FRANCES BRAWNE."

That is all. The tale of John Keats's life is told. He is "among the English poets" as he greatly desired to be.

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF KEATS'S POEMS

Compiled According to the Latest Information

1812–1813?	*Imitation of Spenser.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
August, 1814.	*Fill for me a Brimming Bowl.*
December, 1814.	*On Death.*
December, 1814.	Sonnet: *To Byron.*
1814–1815?	Sonnet: *On Peace.* (After Napoleon went to Elba, or after Waterloo.)
1815.	Sonnet: *To Chatterton.*
February, 1815.	*To Hope.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
February, 1815.	Sonnet: *Written on the Day that Mr. Leigh Hunt left Prison.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
February, 1815.	*Ode to Apollo.*
May 29, 1815?	*Lines on the Anniversary of Charles II's Restoration.* (Published for the first time.)
1815.	*Woman! when I behold thee.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
1815.	*To Some Ladies.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
1815.	*On Receiving a Curious Shell.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
1815.	Sonnet: *To a Young Lady who sent me a Laurel Crown.*
November, 1815.	*Sonnet to Solitude.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
November, 1815.	*Epistle to George Felton Matthew.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
February 13? 1816.	*To Georgiana Augusta Wylie.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
March, 1816.	Sonnet: *On an Engraved Gem of Leander.*
March, 1816.	Sonnet: *How many bards.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
1816.	*O Come dearest Emma.*
1816.	*Apollo and the Graces.*
1816.	*You Say You Love.*
1816.	*Hither, hither, love.*
Spring or early Summer, 1816.	*Specimen of an Induction to a Poem.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
Spring or early Summer, 1816.	*Calidore.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
1816.	*I Stood Tip-toe.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
Summer, 1816.	Sonnet: *Oh, how I love.*
June, 1816.	Sonnet: *To one who has been long in city pent.* (*Poems.* 1817.)

June 29, 1816.	Sonnet: *To a Friend who sent me some Roses.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
August, 1816.	Sonnet: *To my Brother George.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
August, 1816.	*Epistle to my Brother George.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
August, 1816?	Sonnet: *The Poet.* (Published for the first time.)
September, 1816.	*Epistle to Charles Cowden Clarke.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
October, 1816.	Sonnet: *On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
1816.	Sonnet: *Before he went to feed with owls and bats.*
1816.	*Hymn to Apollo.*
1816.	Sonnet: *On Receiving a Laurel Crown from Leigh Hunt.*
1816.	Sonnet: *To the Ladies who saw me Crowned.*
Autumn, 1816.	Sonnet: *Addressed to Haydon.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
November 18, 1816.	Sonnet: *To my Brothers.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
November 29, 1816.	Sonnet: *Great Spirits now on earth are sojourning.* (To Haydon.) (*Poems.* 1817.)
Early Winter, 1816.	Sonnet: *Keen, fitful gusts.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
Winter, 1816.	Sonnet: *On Leaving Some Friends at an Early Hour.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
Autumn and Winter, 1816.	*Sleep and Poetry.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
December, 1816.	Sonnet: *Happy is England.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
December, 1816.	Sonnet: *To Kosciusko.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
December, 1816.	Sonnet: *To G. A. W.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
Sunday Evening, December 22, 1816.	Sonnet: *Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition.*
December 30, 1816.	Sonnet: *On the Grasshopper and Cricket.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
1816.	Sonnet: *As from the darkling gloom.*
1816.	Sonnet: *Had I a man's fair form.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
January 31, 1817.	Sonnet: *After dark vapours.*
February, 1817.	Dedication Sonnet to 1817 Volume: *To Leigh Hunt, Esq.* (*Poems.* 1817.)
1817.	Sonnet: *On "The Story of Rimini."*
February, 1817.	Sonnet: *Written at the end of "The Floure and the Lefe."*
March, 1817.	Two Sonnets: *To Haydon, on seeing the Elgin Marbles.*
April 16, 1817.	Sonnet: *On the Sea.*
April–November, 1817.	*Endymion.*
September, 1817.	*On Oxford.*
November 11, 1817.	*Think not of it, sweet one.*
1817.	*Unfelt, unheard, unseen.*
December, 1817.	*In Drear-Nighted December.*

1818.	*Welcome Joy and Welcome Sorrow.*
January 16, 1818.	Sonnet: *To a Cat.*
January 21, 1818.	*Lines on seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair.*
January 22, 1818.	Sonnet: *On sitting down to read "King Lear" once again.*
January, 1818.	Sonnet: *When I have fears.*
January 31, 1818.	*O blush not so!*
January 31, 1818.	*Hence Burgundy, Claret, and Port.*
February 1? 1818.	*Lines on the Mermaid Tavern.* (1820 Volume.)
February 3, 1818.	*Robin Hood.* (1820 Volume.)
February 4, 1818.	Sonnet: *To a Lady seen for a few Moments at Vauxhall.*
February 4, 1818.	Sonnet: *To the Nile.*
February 5, 1818.	Sonnet: *To Spenser.*
February 8, 1818.	Sonnet: *Blue! 'Tis the life of heaven.*
February 19, 1818	*What the Thrush Said.*
February–April, 1818.	*Isabella; or The Pot of Basil.* (1820 Volume.)
1818.	*Extracts from an Opera.* (Including *Daisy's Song, The Stranger lighted from his steed,* and *Asleep! O Sleep,* etc.)
1818.	*Fairy Songs.*
1818.	*Spirit here that reignest.*
1818?	*Modern Love.*
1818.	Sonnet: *To Homer.*
1818.	Fragment: *The Castle Builder.*
March, 1818.	Sonnet: *The Human Seasons.*
March 21, 1818.	*Here all the Summer.*
March 21, 1818.	*Where be ye going, you Devon Maid?*
March 24, 1818.	*Over the Hill and over the Dale.* (All but first stanza published for the first time.)
March 25, 1818.	*Epistle to John Hamilton Reynolds.*
April 20 or 21, 1818.	Sonnet: *To J. R.*
May 1, 1818.	*Ode to Maia.* (Fragment.)
June 27, 1818.	*Acrostic to Georgiana Augusta Keats.*
June 28, 1818.	*Sweet, sweet is the greeting of eyes.* (Published for the first time.)
July 1, 1818.	Sonnet: *On Visiting the Tomb of Burns.*
July 3, 1818.	*Meg Merrilies.*
July 3, 1818.	*There was a naughty Boy.*
July 9, 1818.	*A Galloway Song.*
July 10, 1818.	Sonnet: *To Ailsa Rock.*
July 11, 1818.	Sonnet: *Written in the Cottage where Burns was born.*
July, 1818.	*Lines written in the Highlands after a visit to Burns's Country.*
July 17, 1818.	Sonnet: *On Hearing the Bag-pipe.*
July 24, 1818.	*Staffa.*
August 2, 1818.	Sonnet: *Written on the Top of Ben Nevis.*
August 3, 1818.	*Ben Nevis.*

September, 1818.	Translation of a Sonnet by Ronsard.
Late September, 1818.	*Vision of Hyperion* begun.
October, 1818.	*A Prophecy.* ("'Tis the witching hour of night.")
December, 1818.	*Fancy.* (1820 Volume.)
December, 1818.	*Bards of Passion and of Mirth.* (1820 Volume.)
December, 1818.	*I had a Dove.*
1818.	*Hush, Hush! tread softly.*
1818.	*Where's the Poet?*
1818.	Spenserian Stanza: *In after time, a sage of mickle lore.*
December, 1818–April, 1819.	*Hyperion.*
January, 1819.	*Ode to Fanny.*
January–September, 1819.	*The Eve of St. Agnes.* (1820 Volume.)
February 13–17–September, 1819.	*The Eve of St. Mark.*
March, 1819.	Sonnet: *Why did I laugh to-night?*
April, 1819.	Sonnet: *Bright Star, would I were steadfast as thou art.*
April 15, 1819.	*An Extempore.*
April 16, 1819.	*Spenserian Stanzas on Charles Brown.*
April, 1819.	Sonnet: *As Hermes once took to his feathers light.*
April 17, 1819.	*Two or three Posies.*
April 28, 1819.	*La Belle Dame Sans Merci.*
End of April, 1819.	*Song of Four Fairies.*
Spring, 1819.	Sonnet: *To Sleep.*
End of April, 1819.	Two Sonnets: *On Fame.*
April, 1819.	*Ode to Psyche.* (1820 Volume.)
April, 1819.	*Experimental Sonnet.*
May, 1819.	*Ode on a Grecian Urn.* (1820 Volume.)
May, 1819.	*Ode on Melancholy.* (1820 Volume.)
May, 1819.	*Ode to a Nightingale.* (1820 Volume.)
May, 1819.	*Ode on Indolence.*
July–August, 1819.	*Lamia.* (1820 Volume.)
July, 1819.	*Gripus.* (Fragment.) (Published for the first time.)
July–August, 1819.	*Otho the Great.*
September 17, 1819.	*A Party of Lovers.*
September 19, 1819.	Ode: *To Autumn.* (1820 Volume.)
September, 1819.	*Vision of Hyperion* resumed.
October 10, 1819.	Sonnet: *The day is gone.*
October, 1819.	*Lines to Fanny.*
November, 1819.	*King Stephen.*
November, 1819.	Sonnet: *To Fanny.*
November–December, 1819.	*The Cap and Bells.*
Autumn, 1819.	*This living hand, now warm and capable.*

APPENDIX B

THE *GRIPUS* FRAGMENT

AS IT APPEARS IN THE WOODHOUSE BOOK. MORGAN LIBRARY

And gold and silver are but filthy dross
Then seek not gold and silver which are dross
But rather lay thy treasure up in heav'n! —
Heav'n!
And thou has meat & drink and lodging too
And clothing too, what more can man require?
And thou art single —
But I must lay up money for my children
My children's children & my great grand children
For Slim! thy master will be shortly married —
Married!
Yea! married wherefore dost thou stare
As tho' my words had spoke of aught impossible
My lord I stare not but my ears play'd false
Methought you had said married.
Married fool!
Is't aught unlikely I'm not very old
And my intended has a noble fortune
My lord 'tis likely
Haste thou to the butcher's
And ere thou go, tell Bridget she is wanted —
I go — Gods! what a subject for an ode
With Hymen Cupid's Venus — loves & graces exit!
Gripus Solus.
This matrimony is no light affair
'Tis downright venture & mere speculation
Less risk there is in what the merchant trusts
To winds & waves and the uncertain elements
For he can have assurance for his goods
And put himself beyond the reach of losses —
But who can e'er ensure to me a wife
Industrious and managing and frugal
Who will not spend far more than she has brought
But be almost as saving to her husband —
But none can tell — the broker cannot tell
He is not cheated in the wares he buys
And to judge well of woman or the seas
Would oft surpass the wisest merchants' prudence
For both are deep alike — capricious too —
And the worst things that money can be sunk in —

But Bridget comes —
Your pleasure Sir with me
Bridget I wish to have a little converse
Upon a matter that concerns us both
Of like importance both to thee and me
Of like importance and concerning both
What can your Honour have to say to me
Oh Lord! I would give all that I am worth
To know what tis. —
Then pray thee rein thy tongue
That ever battles with thine own impatience —
But to the point — thou knows't for twenty years
Together we have liv'd as man and wife —
But never hath the sanction of the Church
Stamp'd its legality upon our union —
B. Well what of that —
Why when in wiser years
Men look upon the follies of their youth
They oft repent — and wish to make amends
And seek for happier in more virtuous days
In such a case & such is mine I own
Tis marriage offers us the readiest way
To make atonement for our former deeds
And thus have I determin'd in my heart
To make amends — in other words to marry —
O lord! how overjoy'd I am to hear it!
I vow that I have often thought myself
What wickedness it was to live as we did!
But do you joke —
Not so upon my oath —
I am resolv'd to marry and beget
A little heir to leave my little wealth to
I am not old — my hair is hardly grey
My health is good — what hast thou to object?
O dear how close your honour puts the question
I've said as much already as was fit
And incompatible with female modesty —
But would your honour please to name a day?
G. To name a day! but hark I hear a knock
'Tis perhaps young Prodigal I did expect him —
B. But Sir — a day?
Zounds! dost thou hear the bell
Wilt thou not run — he was to bring me money —
(exit B. & returns)
'Tis he I've shown him to the little study —
Then stay thee here and when I've settled him
I will return & hold more converse with thee. (exit.)
B. Solus My head runs round O what a happy change!
Now I shall be another woman quite —

Dame Bridget then adieu and don't forget
Your lady Gripus now that is to be;
Great Lady Gripus — O lord —
The Lady of the old and rich Sir Gripus! —
O how will people whisper as I pass —
There goes my lady — what a handsome gownd
All scarlet silk embroidered with gold
Or green & gold will perhaps become me better
How vastly fine — how handsome I shall be
In green & gold — besides a lady too —
I'll have a footman too — to walk behind me
Slim is too slender to set off a livery
I must have one more lustier than him
A proper man to walk behind his lady
O how genteel — methinks I see myself
In green and gold and carrying my fan
Or perhaps I'd have a ridicule about me
The lusty footman all so spruce behind me
Walking on tiptoe in a bran new livery
And he shall have a favour in his hat
As sure as ever I am lady Gripus! —
Enter Slim
Why how now Bridget you're turn'd actress sure!
An actor fellow in to something better
To something grander and more lady like!
Know I am turn'd
a lunatic 'tis plain
But lovee leave this jesting for a while
And hear thy servant who thus pleads for favour
For favour Sirrah! but I must be kind
I will forget your insolence this once
And condescend to keep you in my service
But no — I want a much more lustier man
You are too slender to become my livery
I must excard you — you must suit yourself —
Why how now Bridget
You forget me sure
Forget thee Bridget never from my heart
Shall thy dear image part
Ah no
I love you so
No language can impart
Alas! 'tis love that makes me thin
I have a fiery flame within
That burns and shrivels up my skin
'Tis Cupid's little dart
And by this kiss I swear (attempts to kiss her)
B. Ruffin begone or I will tell my Lord
Do you not care for difference of rank

Nor make distinction between dirt and dignity
Why Bridget once you did not treat me thus —
No — times are alter'd — Fortune's wheel is turn'd
You still are Slim but tho' I once was Bridget
Did not his Honour tell me he should marry —
Yea — to a lady of ample fortune —
Why that you fool he said in allegolly
A virtuous woman is she not a crown
A crown of gold and glory to her husband —
Heaven is it possible — I pray forgive me
That I could doubt a moment of that fortune
Which is but due to your assembled merits —
Well Slim I do not wish to harbour malice
But while you show a proper due respect
You may be certain of my condescention —
But — hark! I hear his lordship on the stairs
And we must have some privacy together. (ex. S.)
O lord how overjoy'd I am your honour —
G. Bridget I thank thee for thy friendly zeal
That seems to glory in thy Master's bliss —
And much it grieves me that I can't requite it
Except by mere reciprocal good-wishes —
For as a change in my domestic government
Will make thy place in future but a sinecure
It grieves me much that I must warn you thus
To seek and get a situation elsewhere. —
O dear — O lord — what a shock — O lord! (faints)
G. Ho! Slim — the devils in the fool to faint
Halloo! — what shall I do — halloo! halloo
Ho! Slim I say — run Sirrah! for the brandy
S. The brandy Sir — there is none in the house! —
G. No brandy! none! what none at all thou knave
What none at all! thou rascal thou hast drunk it
Why Bridget, Bridget, — what! no brandy knave
Zounds! what a fit — Where is my brandy Wretch!
Thou toping Villain say or I will slay thee —
(lets Bridget fall & collars Slim)
S. O lord — forgive me — Bridget had the wind
And drank the brandy up to warm her stomach
G. A tipsy Bacchanal! then let her lie!
I'll not be drunken out of house and home
Zounds! brandy for the wind — a cure indeed!
A little water had done just as well
This is the way then when I want a drop
I always find my cellar is stark naked
But both shall go yes — I discard ye — Thieves!
Begone ye thieves!
(Bridget jumps up)
No not without my wages

I'll have a month's full wages or my warning
I'll not be left at non-plush for a place —
G. A month's full warning — what another month!
To sack to ransack and to strip the house
And then depart in triumph with your booty
Begone I say
No not without my wages!
And I'll have damages you cruel man
I will convict you of a breach of marriage
Begone I say. Deceitful Thing! begone —
Who ever dar'd to promise such a match
But thy own fancy — & thy lying tongue
What marry one as poor as a church mouse!
And equally devoid of rank and beauty
Reason would sleep and prudence would be blind
And Gripus then would be no longer Gripus
But only fitting for more sober men
To lodge in Bedlam & to call a lunatic.

THE *GRIPUS* FRAGMENT

SPACED AND PUNCTUATED BY ME. A.L.

Gripus And gold and silver are but filthy dross.
Then seek not gold and silver, which are dross,
But rather lay thy treasure up in heav'n.

Slim Heav'n!

Gripus And thou hast meat and drink and lodging too,
And clothing too. What more can man require?
And thou art single.
But I must lay up money for my children,
My children's children, and my great-grandchildren.
For, Slim, thy master will be shortly married.

Slim Married!

Gripus Yea, married. Wherefore dost thou stare
As tho' my words had spoke of aught impossible?

Slim My lord, I stare not, but my ears play'd false.
Methought you had said married.

Gripus Married, fool!
Is't aught unlikely? I'm not very old,
And my intended has a noble fortune.

Slim My lord, 'tis likely.

Gripus Haste thou to the butcher's,
And, ere thou go, tell Bridget she is wanted.

Slim I go. Gods! What a subject for an ode,
With Hymen Cupid's Venus. Loves and graces! (Exit.)
(Gripus solus.)

Gripus This matrimony is no light affair,
'Tis downright venture and mere speculation.
Less risk there is in what the merchant trusts
To winds and waves and the uncertain elements,
For he can have assurance for his goods
And put himself beyond the reach of losses.
But who can e'er ensure to me a wife
Industrious and managing and frugal,
Who will not spend far more than she has brought
But be almost as saving to her husband?
But none can tell. The broker cannot tell
He is not cheated in the wares he buys,
And to judge well of woman or the seas
Would oft surpass the wisest merchants' prudence,
For both are deep alike, capricious too,
And the worst things that money can be sunk in.
But Bridget comes. (Enter Bridget.)

Bridget Your pleasure, Sir, with me?

Gripus Bridget, I wish to have a little converse
Upon a matter that concerns us both,
Of like importance both to thee and me,
Of like importance and concerning both.

Bridget What can your Honour have to say to me?
Oh Lord! I would give all that I am worth
To know what 'tis!

Gripus Then pray thee rein thy tongue
That ever battles with thine own impatience.
But, to the point. Thou knows't for twenty years
Together we have liv'd as man and wife,
But never hath the sanction of the Church
Stamp'd its legality upon our union.

Bridget Well, what of that?

Gripus Why, when in wiser years
Men look upon the follies of their youth,
They oft repent, and wish to make amends,
And seek for happier in more virtuous days.
In such a case, and such is mine, I own,

'Tis marriage offers us the readiest way
To make atonement for our former deeds.
And thus have I determin'd in my heart
To make amends — in other words, to marry.

Bridget O Lord! How overjoy'd I am to hear it!
I vow that I have often thought myself
What wickedness it was to live as we did.
But do you joke?

Gripus Not so, upon my oath!
I am resolved to marry and beget
A little heir to leave my little wealth to.
I am not old, my hair is hardly grey,
My health is good. What hast thou to object?

Bridget O dear! How close your Honour puts the question!
I've said as much already as was fit
And incompatible with female modesty.
But would your Honour please to name a day?

Gripus To name a day! But, hark! I hear a knock.
'Tis perhaps young Prodigal, I did expect him.

Bridget But, Sir, a day —

Gripus Zounds! Dost thou hear the bell?
Wilt thou not run? He was to bring me money.
(Exit Bridget and returns)

Bridget 'Tis he. I've shown him to the little study.

Gripus Then stay thee here, and when I've settled him
I will return and hold more converse with thee. (Exit)
(Bridget solus)

Bridget My head runs round. O what a happy change!
Now I shall be another woman quite.
Dame Bridget then adieu, and don't forget
Your lady Gripus now that is to be.
Great Lady Gripus! O Lord!
The Lady of the old and rich Sir Gripus!
O how will people whisper as I pass!
"There goes my lady. What a handsome gownd,
All scarlet silk embroidered with gold!"
Or green and gold will perhaps become me better.
How vastly fine, how handsome I shall be
In green and gold — besides, a lady too!
I'll have a footman, too, to walk behind me.
Slim is too slender to set off a livery,
I must have one more lustier than him,

A proper man to walk behind his lady.
O how genteel! Methinks I see myself
In green and gold and carrying my fan,
Or perhaps I'd have a ridicule about me,
The lusty footman all so spruce behind me,
Walking on tiptoe in a bran new livery,
And he shall have a favour in his hat
As sure as ever I am Lady Gripus.
(Enter Slim)

Slim Why, how now, Bridget? You're turn'd actress sure!

Bridget An actor, fellow! Into something better,
To something grander and more lady like!
Know I am turn'd —

Slim A lunatic, 'tis plain.
But, lovee, leave this jesting for a while
And hear thy servant who thus pleads for favour.

Bridget For favour, Sirrah! But I must be kind,
I will forget your insolence this once,
And condescend to keep you in my service.
But no — I want a much more lustier man,
You are too slender to become my livery.
I must excard you — you must suit yourself.

Slim Why, how now, Bridget?

Bridget You forget me sure.

Slim Forget thee, Bridget? Never from my heart
Shall thy dear image part.
Ah, no,
I love you so,
No language can impart.
Alas! 'tis love that makes me thin,
I have a fiery flame within,
That burns and shrivels up my skin.
'Tis Cupid's little dart
And by this kiss I swear (attempts to kiss her)

Bridget Ruffin, begone, or I will tell my Lord.
Do you not care for difference of rank
Nor make distinction between dirt and dignity?

Slim Why, Bridget, once you did not treat me thus.

Bridget No. Times are alter'd. Fortune's wheel is turn'd.

You still are Slim, but tho' I once was Bridget,
Did not his Honour tell me he should marry.

Slim Yea, to a lady of an ample fortune.

Bridget Why, that, you fool, he said in allegolly.
A virtuous woman, is she not a crown,
A crown of gold and glory to her husband?

Slim Heaven! Is it possible? I pray forgive me
That I could doubt a moment of that fortune
Which is but due to your assembled merits.

Bridget Well, Slim, I do not wish to harbour malice,
But while you show a proper due respect
You may be certain of my condescention.
But — hark! I hear his lordship on the stairs,
And we must have some privacy together.
(Exit Slim and enter Gripus)

Bridget O Lord! How overjoy'd I am, your Honour!

Gripus Bridget, I thank thee for thy friendly zeal
That seems to glory in thy Master's bliss,
And much it grieves me that I can't requite it
Except by mere reciprocal good wishes.
For, as a change in my domestic government
Will make thy place in future but a sinecure,
It grieves me much that I must warn you thus
To seek and get a situation elsewhere.

Bridget O dear! O Lord! What a shock! O Lord! (faints)

Gripus Ho! Slim! The devil's in the fool to faint.
Halloo! What shall I do? Halloo! Halloo!
Ho! Slim, I say. Run, Sirrah, for the brandy.

Slim The brandy, Sir? There is none in the house.

Gripus No brandy! None! What, none at all, thou knave?
What, none at all, thou rascal! Thou hast drunk it.
Why, Bridget, Bridget. What! No brandy, knave!
Zounds! what a fit! Where is my brandy, Wretch?
Thou toping Villain, say, or I will slay thee.
(Lets Bridget fall and collars Slim)

Slim O Lord! Forgive me. Bridget had the wind
And drank the brandy up to warm her stomach.

Gripus A tipsy Bacchanal! Then let her lie.
I'll not be drunken out of house and home.
Zounds! Brandy for the wind! A cure indeed!
A little water had done just as well.
This is the way, then, when I want a drop
I always find my cellar is stark naked.
But both shall go. Yes, I discard ye. Thieves!
Begone, ye thieves!

(Bridget jumps up)

Bridget No, not without my wages.
I'll have a month's full wages or my warning.
I'll not be left at non-plush for a place.

Gripus A month's full warning! What, another month
To sack, to ransack, and to strip the house,
And then depart in triumph with your booty!
Begone, I say.

Bridget No, not without my wages!
And I'll have damages, you cruel man,
I will convict you of a breach of marriage.

Gripus Begone, I say. Deceitful Thing, begone.
Who ever dar'd to promise such a match
But thy own fancy and thy lying tongue?
What, marry one as poor as a church mouse
And equally devoid of rank and beauty!
Reason would sleep and prudence would be blind
And Gripus then would be no longer Gripus,
But only fitting for more sober men
To lodge in Bedlam and to call a lunatic.

APPENDIX C

ANNOTATIONS AND UNDERSCORED PASSAGES IN BOOKS OWNED OR BORROWED BY KEATS

A VOLUME OF SPENSER CONTAINING THE FIRST CANTO OF *THE FAIRY QUEEN*.[1]

This is the first volume of *The Works of Mr. Edmund Spenser, in Six Volumes*, published by Mr. Hughes. London. Printed for Jacob Tonson. 1715.

On the title-page is written: "George Keats. 1816." There is a hieroglyph in the corner, which has been supposed to be "J. K." I cannot make it out as such, but the only annotation proper (in distinction to marks and underscorings) is certainly by John Keats. Both brothers marked their books, but John was more given to the practice than George, and for three reasons I feel quite sure that the poet and not his brother is responsible for those in this volume. The first reason is George Keats's express statement to Mr. James Freeman Clarke that this particular Spenser was much used by John; the second, that the only annotation is indubitably in John's handwriting; the third, that the handwriting of the brothers is totally unlike, John's being far the bolder of the two. George bore more lightly on his pen than John, with the consequence that his strokes are thinner and more capable of the "shading" in vogue at the period. Comparing the pen lines with which the text is scored with those in the *Poems* given by John to George the difference is very noticeable. The pen marks in the *Poems* are so light as to be almost broken at times, as though the pen were thrown up by the inequalities of the paper, causing the line it drew to seem almost as if composed of a series of dots; those in the Spenser are firm and continuous as in all the books marked by the poet which I have seen. John's lines are also much less regular than George's. There are four underscorings which I have no hesitation in pronouncing to be by George Keats; and so firmly do I believe this that I have not included them here.

I have followed Keats's marks exactly throughout. Where, for the sake of clarity, it has been necessary to quote lines not marked by the poet, either immediately before or after those he has chosen, such lines are printed without marks.

The First Book only of the *Fairy Queen* appears in this volume, for which reason I have merely indicated the cantos and stanzas.

Introduction. Me, all to mean, the sacred Muse areeds
Stanza I. To blazon 'broad, amongst her learned Throng:
Fierce Warres, and faithful Loves, shall moralize my Song.

[1] Author's Collection.

Introduction. Stanza II.

Lay forth out of thine everlasting Scrine
The antique Rolls, which there lie hidden still,
Of Fairy Knights,

Introduction. Stanza III.

Lay now thy deadly Heben Bowe apart,
And with thy Mother mild come to mine ayd:

Canto I. Stanza I.

A Gentle Knight was pricking on the Plain,
Yclad in mightie Arms and silver Shield,

C. I. S. II.

But of his Cheere did seem too solemn sad:
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.

C. I. S. IV.

A lovely Lady rode him fair beside,
Upon a lowly Asse more white than Snow;
Yet she much whiter, but the same did hide
Under a Veil, that wimpled was full low,
And over all a black Stole she did throw,
As one that inly mournd: so was she sad,
And heavie sat upon her Palfrey slow;
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had,
And by her in a line a milk-white Lamb she lad.

C. I. S. V.

So pure an Innocent, as that same Lamb,
She was in Life and every vertuous Lore,
And by Descent from Royall Lynage came
Of ancient Kings and Queens, that had of yore
Their Scepters stretcht from East to Western Shore,

C. I. S. VI.

Behind her farr away a Dwarf did lag,
That lazie seem'd in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her Bag
Of Needments at his Back.

C. I. S. VII.

A shadie Grove not farr away they spide,
That promist Aid the Tempest to withstand:
Whose loftly Trees, yclad with Summer's Pride,
Did spread so broad, they Heaven's Light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any Starr:
And all within were Paths and Alleys wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farr:

C. I. S. VIII.

The sailing Pine, the Cedar proud and tall,
The Vine-prop Elm, the Poplar never dry,
The builder Oak, sole King of Forrests all,
The Aspine good for Staves, the Cypress Funeral.

C. I. S. IX.

The Laurel, Meed of mighty Conquerors
And Poets sage, the Firr that weepeth still,
The Willow, worn of forlorne Paramours,
The Ewe, obedient to the Bender's will,
The Birch for Shafts, the Sallow for the Mill,
The Mirrhe, sweet bleeding in the bitter Wound,
The warlike Beech, the Ash for nothing ill,
The fruitful Olive, and the Platane round,
The Carver Holme, the Maple seldom inward found.

C. I. S. XI.

At length it brought them to a hollow Cave,
Amid the thickest Woods. The Champion stout
Eftsoons dismounted from his Courser brave,
And to the Dwarf awhile his needless Spear he gave.

C. I. S. XIV.

His glistring Armour made
A little glooming Light, much like a Shade,

C. I. S. XV.

Her huge long Tail her Den all overspred,
Yet was in Knots and many Boughtes upwound,
Pointed with mortal Sting. . . .
.
Soon as that uncouth Light upon them shone,
Into her Mouth they crept, and sudden all were gone.

C. I. S. XVI.

Their Dam upstart, out of her Den effraide,
And rushed forth, hurling her hideous Tail
About her cursed Head; whose Folds display'd
Were stretch'd now forth at length without Entrail.

C. I. S. XVII.

And turning fierce, her speckled Tail advaunc'd,

C. I. S. XVIII.

Much daunted with that Dint, her Sense was daz'd,
Yet kindling Rage, she her self gathered round,
And all at once her beastly Body rais'd
With doubled Forces high above the Ground:
Tho wrapping up her wreathed Stern around,
Lept fierce upon his Shield, and her huge Train
All suddenly about his Body wound,
That Hand or Foot to stir he strove in vain:
God help the Man so wrapt in Error's endless Train.

C. I. S. XX.

Therewith she spew'd out of her filthy Maw
A flood of Poison horrible and black,
Full of great Lumps of Flesh and Gobbets raw,
Which stunk so vildly, that it forc'd him slack
His grasping hold, and from her turn him back:
Her Vomit full of Books and Papers was,
With loathly Frogs and Toads, which Eyes did lack,
And creeping, sought way in the weedy Grass:
Her filthy Parbreake all the Place defiled has.

C. 1. S. XXI.

As when old Father Nilus 'gins to swell
With timely Pride above th' Ægyptian Vale,
His fatty Waves do fertile Slime outwell,
And overflow each Plain and lowly Dale:

C. 1. S. XXII.

Deformed Monsters, foul, and black as ink;
Which swarming all about his Legs did crawll,

C. 1. S. XXIII.

As gentle Shepherd in sweet Even-tide,
When ruddy Phœbus 'gins to welk in West,
High on an Hill, his Flock to vewen wide,
Marks which do bite their hasty Supper best;
A Cloud of cumbrous Gnats do him molest,
All striving to infix their feeble Stings,
That from their noyance he no where can rest,
But with his clownish Hands their tender Wings
He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their Murmurings.

C. 1. S. XXIX.

At length they chaunst to meet upon the way
An aged Sire, in long black Weeds yclad,
His Feet all bare, his Beard all hoary Gray,
And by his Belt his Book he hanging had;
Sober he seem'd, and very sagely sad,
And to the Ground his Eyes were lowly bent,
Simple in shew, and void of Malice bad,
And all the way he prayed, as he went,
And often knock'd his Breast, as one that did repent.

C. 1. S. XXX.

Silly old Man, that lives in hidden Cell,
Bidding his Beads all day for his Trespass,

C. 1. S. XXXII.

Far hence (quoth he) in wastful Wilderness
His Dwelling is, by which no living Wight
May ever pass, but thorough great Distress.
.
The Sun that measures Heaven all day long,
At Night doth bait his Steeds the Ocean Waves emong.

C. 1. S. XXXIV.

A little lowly Hermitage it was,
Down in a Dale, hard by a Forests side,
Far from resort of People, that did pass
In Travel to and fro: a little wide
There was an holy Chappel edify'd,
Werein the Hermit duely wont to say
His holy things each Morn and Even-tyde:
Thereby a Chrystal Stream did gently play,
Which from a sacred Fountain welled forth alway.

C. 1. S. XXXV.

For that old Man of pleasing Words had store,
And well could file his Tongue as smooth as Glass;
He told of Saints and Popes, and evermore
He strow'd an Ave-Mary after and before.

C. 1. S. XXXVI.

The drooping Night thus creepeth on them fast,
And the sad Humour loading their Eye-lids,
As Messenger of Morpheus on them cast
Sweet slumbering Dew, the which to sleep them bids.
Unto their Lodgings then his Guests he ridds:
Where when all drown'd in deadly sleep he finds,
He to his Study goes, and there amidds
His Magick Books and Arts of sundry kinds,
He seeks out mighty Charms to trouble sleepy Minds.

C. 1. S. XXXVIII.

And forth he call'd, out of deep Darkness dread,
Legions of Sprights, the which like little Flies
Fluttring about his ever-damned Head,

C. 1. S. XXXIX.

He making speedy way through spersed Air,
And through the World of Waters wide and deep,
To Morpheus' House doth hastily repair.
Amid the Bowels of the Earth full steep,
And low, where dawning Day doth never peep,
His dwelling is; there Thetis his wet Bed
Doth ever wash, and Cynthia still doth steep
In silver Dew his ever-drooping Head,
Whiles sad Night over him her Mantle black doth spread.

C. 1. S. XL.

By them the Sprite doth pass in quietly,
And unto Morpheus comes, whom drowned deep,
In drowsy Fit he finds; of nothing he takes keep.

C. 1. S. XLI.

And more, to lull him in his Slumber soft,
A trickling Stream from high Rock tumbling down,
And ever drizling Rain upon the Loft,
Mixt with a murmuring Wind, much like the Sound
Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a Swoon:

C. 1. S. XLII.

The Messenger approaching, to him spake,
But his waste words return'd to him in vain:
So sound he slept, that nought mought him awake.
Then rudely he him thrust, and push'd with Pain,
Whereat he 'gan to stretch: but he again
Shook him so hard, that forced him to speak.
As one then in a Dream, whose dryer Brain
Is tost with troubled Sights and Fancies weak,
He mumbled soft, but would not all his Silence break.

C. 1. S. XLIII.

The Sprite then 'gan more boldly him to wake,
And threatned unto him the dreaded Name
Of Hecate; whereat he 'gan to quake,
And lifting up his lumpish Head, with blame,
Half angry, asked him, For what he came.
Hither (quoth he) me Archimago sent,
He that the stubborn Sprites can wisely tame,
He bids thee to him send, for his intent,
A fit false Dream, that can delude the Sleepers sent.

C. 1. S. XLIV.

The God obey'd, and calling forth straight-way
A diverse Dream out of his Prison dark,
Deliver'd it to him, and down did lay
His heavy Head, devoid of careful cark,
Whose Senses all were straight benumb'd and stark.
He back returning by the Ivory Door,
Remounted up as light as chearful Lark,
And on his little Wings the Dream he bore
In haste unto his Lord, where he him left afore.

C. 1. S. XLV.

Who all this while with Charms and hidden Arts,
Had made a Lady of that other Spright,
And fram'd of liquid Air her tender parts
So lively, and so like in all Mens sight,
That weaker Sense it could have ravish'd quite:
The Maker's self, for all his wondrous Wit,
Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight:
Her all in white he clad, and over it
Cast a black Stole, most like to seem for Una fit.

C. 1. S. XLVII.

Then seemed him his Lady by him lay,
And to him plain'd, how that false winged Boy
Her chaste Heart had subdu'd, to learn Dame Pleasure's Toy.

C. 1. S. XLVIII.

And she her self, of Beauty soveraign Queen,
Fair Venus, seem'd unto his Bed to bring
Her, whom he waking evermore did ween
To be the chastest Flower that ay did spring
On earthly Bronch, the Daughter of a King,
Now a loose Leman to vile Service bound:
And eke the Graces seemed all to sing
Hymen Iõ Hymen, dancing all around,
Whilst freshest Flora her with Ivy Garland crown'd.

C. 1. S. XLIX.

Lo there before his Face his Lady is,
Under black Stole hiding her baited Hook,
And as half blushing, offer'd him to kiss,
With gentle Blandishment and lovely Look,

C. 1. S. L. ‖Wringing her Hands in Womens piteous wise,

C. 1. S. LII. And then again begun: My weaker Years
Captiv'd to Fortune and frail worldly Fears,
Fly to your Faith for Succour and sure Aid:
|Let me not die in Languor and long Tears.

C. 1. S. LIV. Not all content, yet seem'd she to appease
Her mournful Plaints, beguiled of her Art,
And fed with Words that could not chuse but please,
So sliding softly forth, she turn'd as to her Ease.

C. 1. S. LV. At last dull weariness of former Fight
Having yrock'd asleep his irksome Spright,
That troublous Dream 'gan freshly toss his Brain,

C. 2. S. I. By this the Northern Waggoner had set
His sevenfold Teme behind the stedfast Star,
That was in Ocean Waves yet never wet,
But firm is fix'd, and sendeth Light from far
To all, that in the wide Deep wandring are:
And chearful Chaunticleer, with his Note shrill,
Had warned once, that Phœbus' fiery Carr
In haste was climbing up the Eastern Hill,
Full envious that Night so long his Room did fill.

C. 2. S. III. Eftsoons he took that miscreated Fair,
And that false other Spright, on whom he spred
A seeming Body of the subtle Air,
Like a young Squire, in Loves and Lusty-hed;
His wanton Days that ever loosely led,
Without regard of Arms and dreaded Fight:
Those two he took, and in a secret Bed,
Cover'd with Darkness and misdeeming Night,
Them both together laid, to joy in vain Delight.

C. 2. S. VII. Now when the rosy-fingerd Morning fair,
Weary of aged Tithon's saffron Bed,
Had spred her purple Robe through dewy Air,
And the high Hills Titan discovered,
The royal Virgin shook off drowsy-hed,
And rising forth out of her baser Bower,
Look'd for her Knight, who far away was fled,
And for her Dwarf, that wont to wait each Hour;
Then 'gan she wail and weep, to see that woful stower.

C. 2. S. VIII. Yet she her weary Limbs would never rest,
But every Hill and Dale, each Wood and Plain
Did search, fore grieved in her gentle Breast,
He so ungently left her, whom she loved best.

C. 2. S. IX.

For her he hated as the hissing Snake,
And in her many Troubles did most pleasure take.

C. 2. S. XI.

But now seem'd best, the Person to put on
Of that good Knight, his late beguiled Guest:
In mighty Arms he was yclad anon,
And silver Shield; upon his Coward Breast
A bloody Cross, and on his craven Crest
A bunch of Hairs discolour'd diversly:
Full jolly Knight he seem'd, and well address'd,
And when he sat upon his Courser free,
Saint George himself ye would have deemed him to be.

C. 2. S. XII.

Will was his Guide, and Grief led him astray.

C. 2. S. XIII.

A goodly Lady clad in scarlet Red,
Purfled with Gold and Pearl in rich assay,
And like a Persian Mitre on her Head
She wore, with Crowns and Owches garnished,
The which her lavish Lovers to her gave;
Her wanton Palfrey all was overspred
With tinsel Trappings, woven like a Wave,
Whose Bridle rung with golden Bells and Bosses brave.

C. 2. S. XIV.

With fair disport and courting dalliance
She entertain'd her Lover all the way:

C. 2. S. XVI.

. . . with the Terror of the Shock
Astonied, both stand senseless as a Block,
Forgetful of the hanging Victory:

C. 2. S. XIX.

. . . his grudging Ghost did strive
With the frail Flesh; at last it flitted is,
Whither the Souls do fly, of Men that live amiss.

C. 2. S. XX.

The Lady, when she saw her Champion fall,
Like the old Ruins of a broken Tower,

C. 2. S. XXVI.

In this sad plight, friendless, unfortunate.

C. 2. S. XXVII.

With change of Chear the seeming simple Maid
Let fall her eyne, as shamefac'd, to the Earth,
And yielding soft, in that she nought gain-said;
So forth they rode, he feigning seemly Mirth,
And she coy Looks:

C. 2. S. XXVIII. ... two goodly Trees, that fair did spred
Their Arms abroad, with grey Moss over-cast;
And their green Leaves trembling with every Blast,
Made a calm Shadow far in compass round:

C. 2. S. XXX | And thinking of those Branches green to frame
| A Garland for her dainty Forehead fit,

C. 2. S. XXXII. | At last, when as the dreadful Passion
| Was over past, and Manhood well awake,

C. 2. S. XXXV. The fire of Love and Joy of Chevalree

C. 2. S. XXXVIII. And by her hellish Science rais'd straightway
A foggy Mist that overcast the day,
And a dull Blast, that breathing on her Face,
Dimmed her former Beauties shining Ray,

C. 2. S. XL. | I chaunst to see her in her proper Hew,
| Bathing herself in Origane and Thyme:

C. 2. S. XLV. ... Her Eye-lids blew
And dimmed sight with pale and deadly Hew,
At last she up 'gan lift: with trembling chear
Her up he took, too simple and too true,
And oft her kist.

C. 3. S. I. | Nought is there under Heav'ns wide hollowness
| That moves more dear Compassion of Mind,
| Than Beauty brought t'unworthy Wretchedness
| Through Envy's Snares or Fortune's Freaks unkind:
| I, whether lately through her Brightness blind,
| Or through Allegiance and fast Fealty,
| Which I do owe unto all Woman-kind,
| Feel my Heart pierc'd with so great Agony,
| When such I see, that all for pity I could die.

C. 3. S. II. And now it is empassioned so deep,
For fairest Una's sake,

C. 3. S. IV. From her unhasty Beast she did alight,
And on the Grass her dainty Limbs did lay
In secret Shadow, far from all Mens sight:
From her fair Head her Fillet she undight
And laid her Stole aside. Her Angel's Face,
As the great Eye of Heaven shined bright,
And made a Sun-shine in the shady place;

C. 3. S. VI.

Instead thereof he kiss'd her weary Feet,
And lick'd her lilly Hands with fauning Tongue,

C. 3. S. VIII.

Redounding Tears did choke th' end of her Plaint,
Which softly echoed from the neighbour Wood;

.
.

At last, in close Heart shutting up her Pain,
Arose the Virgin born of heavenly Brood,
And to her snowy Palfrey got again,

C. 3. S. IX.

The Lion would not leave her desolate,

.
.

From her fair Eyes he took Commaundement,
And ever by her Looks conceived her Intent.

C. 3. S. X.

Till that at length she found the trodden Grass,
In which the Track of People's Footing was,
Under the steep foot of a Mountain hore:
The same she follows, till at last she has
A Damsel spy'd, slow footing her before,
That on her shoulders sad a Pot of Water bore.

C. 3. S. XIII.

Where that old Woman day and night did pray
Upon her Beads devoutly penitent;
Nine hundred Pater-Nosters every day,
And thrice nine hundred Ave's she was wont to say.

C. 3. S. XIV.

And to augment her painful Penance more,
Thrice every Week in Ashes she did sit,
And next her wrinkled Skin rough Sackcloth wore,
And thrice three times did fast from any bit:
But now for fear her Beads she did forget.
Whose needless dread for to remove away,
Fair Una framed Words and Count'nance fit:
Which hardly done, at length she 'gan them pray,

C. 3. S. XV.

The day is spent, and cometh drowsy Night,
When every Creature shrouded is in sleep;
Sad Una down her lays in weary plight,
And at her feet the Lion watch doth keep:
Instead of Rest, she does lament, and weep
For the late Loss of her dear loved Knight,
And sighs and groans, and evermore does steep
Her tender Breast in bitter Tears all Night;

C. 3. S. XVI.

Now when Aldeboran was mounted high
Above the shiny Cassiopeia's Chair,
And all in deadly sleep did drowned lie,
One knocked at the Door, and in would fare;
He knocked fast, and often curs'd, and sware,
That ready Entrance was not at his call:
For on his Back a heavy Load he bare
Of nightly Stealths, and Pillage several,

C. 3. S. XVII.

Then he by cunning sleights in at the Window crept.

C. 3. S. XIX.

And entring is; when that disdainful Beast
Encountring fierce, him suddain doth surprize,
And seizing cruel Claws on trembling Breast
Under his Lordly Foot him proudly hath supprest.

C. 3. S. XXI.

With Pains far passing that long wandring Greek,
That for his Love refused Deity;

C. 3. S. XXV.

. . . he forward 'gan advaunce
His fair enchaunted Steed, and eke his charmed Launce.

C. 3. S. XXV.

Ere long he came where Una travel'd slow,
And that wild Champion waiting her beside:

C. 3. S. XXX.

His lovely words her seem'd due Recompence
Of all her passed Pains: one loving Hour
For many Years of Sorrow can dispense;
A Dram of Sweet is worth a Pound of Sour:
She has forgot, how many a woful stower
For him she late endur'd;

C. 3. S. XXXI.

Much like, as when the beaten Mariner,
That long hath wandred in the Ocean wide,
Oft soust in swelling Thetis' saltish Tear,
And long time having tann'd his tawny Hide
With blustring Breath of Heaven, that none can bide,
And scorching Flames of fierce Orion's hound;
Soon as the Port from far he hath espy'd,
His cheerful Whistle merrily doth sound,
And Nereus crowns with Cups; his Mates him pledge around:

C. 3. S. XXXII.

Such Joy made Una, when her Knight she found;
And eke th' Enchaunter joyous seem'd no less
Than the glad Merchant, that does view from ground
His Ship far come from watry Wilderness;
He hurls out Vows, and Neptune oft doth bless:

C. 3. S. XXXIII.

And the sharp Iron did for Anger eat,
When his hot Rider spur'd his chauffed Side;

C. 3. S. XXXIX.

... but in a Traunce still lay,
And on those guileful dazed Eyes of his
The Cloud of Death did sit.

C. 3. S. XLII.

Eftsoons he pierced through his chauffed Chest
With thrilling Point of deadly Iron Band,
And launc'd his Lordly Heart;

C. 3. S. XLIV.

And all the way, with great lamenting Pain,
And piteous Plaints she filleth his dull Ears,
That stony Heart could riven have in twain,

C. 4. S. XVI.

As fair Aurora in her purple Pall,

C. 4. S. XVII.

Great Juno's golden Chair, the which they say
The Gods stand gazing on, when she does ride
To Jove's high House through Heavens brass-paved way,
Drawn of fair Peacocks, that excel in Pride,
And full of Argus' Eyes their Tails disspredden wide.

C. 4. S. XVIII.

Was sluggish Idleness, the Nurse of Sin;
Upon a slothful Ass he chose to ride,
Array'd in Habit black, and amis thin,
Like to an holy Monk, the Service to begin.

C. 4. S. XIX.

And in his hand his Portress still he bare,
That much was worn, but therein little red:
For of Devotion he had little care,
Still drown'd in Sleep, and most of his days dead;
Scarce could he once uphold his heavy Head,
To looken whether it were Night or Day.
May seem the Wain was very evil led,
When such an one had guiding of the way,

C. 4. S. XXII.

In green Vine Leaves he was right fitly clad,
For other Clothes he could not wear for Heat;
And on his Head an Ivy Garland had,
From under which fast trickled down the Sweat:
Still as he rode, he some-what still did eat,
And in his Hand did bear a Bouzing-Can,
Of which he supt so oft, that on his Seat
His drunken Corse he scarce upholden can;
In Shape and Life, more like a Monster than a Man.

C. 4. S. XXIII.

Full of Diseases was his Carcass blue,
And a dry Dropsy through his Flesh did flow;
Which by mis-diet daily greater grew:
Such one was Gluttony, the second of that Crew.

C. 4. S. XXIV.

And next to him rode lustful Lechery
Upon a bearded Goat, whose rugged Hair
And whally Eyes (the sign of Jealousy)
Was like the Person self, whom he did bear:
Who rough, and black, and filthy did appear,
Unseemly Man to please fair Ladies Eye;
Yet he, of Ladies oft was loved dear,
When fairer faces were bid standen by:
O! who does know the bent of Womens fantasy?

C. 4. S. XXV.

In a green Gown he clothed was full fair,
Which underneath did hide his Filthiness,
And in his Hand a burning Heart he bare,
Full of vain Follies and new-fangleness:
For, he was false, and fraught with Fickleness,
And learned had to love with secret Looks,
And well could daunce and sing with ruefulness,
And Fortunes tell, and read in loving Books,
And thousand other ways to bait his fleshly Hooks.

C. 4. S. XXVII.

And greedy Avarice by him did ride,
Upon a Camel loaden all with Gold;
Two iron Coffers hung on either side,
With precious Metal, full as they might hold,
And in his Lap an heap of Coin he told:
For of his wicked Pelf his God he made,
And unto Hell himself for Money sold;
Accursed Usury was all his Trade,
And right and wrong ylike in equal Ballance weigh'd.

C. 4. S. XXVIII.

His Life was nigh unto Death's Door yplac'd,
And thread-bare Coat and cobled Shoes he ware,
Ne scarce good morsel all his Life did taste,
But both from Back and Belly still did spare,
To fill his Bags, and Riches to compare:

C. 4. S. XXX.

And next to him malicious Envy rode
Upon a ravenous Wolf, and still did chaw
Between his cankred Teeth a venemous Tode,
That all the Poison ran about his Jaw;
But inwardly he chawed his own Maw
At Neighbour's Wealth, that made him ever sad;
For Death it was, when any good he saw,
And wept, that cause of Weeping none he had:
But when he heard of Harm, he wexed wondrous glad.

C. 4. S. XXXI.

All in a Kirtle of discolour'd Say
He clothed was, ypainted full of Eyes;

C. 4. S. XXXIII.

And him besides rides fierce revenging Wrath,
Upon a Lion, loth for to be led;
And in his Hand a burning Brond he hath,
The which he brandesheth about his Head;
His Eyes did hurle forth Sparkles fiery red,
And stared stern on all that him beheld,
As Ashes pale of hew and seeming dead;
And on his Dagger still his Hand he held;

C. 4. S. XXXIV.

His ruffin Rayment all was stain'd with Blood
Which he had spilt, and all to Rags yrent,
Through unadvised Rashness woxen wood;
For of his Hands he had no government,
Ne car'd for Blood in his avengement:
But when the furious Fit was overpast,
His cruel Facts he often would repent;
Yet wilful Man he never would forecast,

C. 4. S. XXXV.

The swelling Spleen, the Phrenzy raging rife,
The shaking Palsey, and Saint Francis' Fire:
Such one was Wrath, the last of this ungodly Tire.

C. 4. S. XXXVI.

And after all, upon the Waggon Beam
Rode Satan, with a smarting Whip in hand,
With which he forward lash'd the lazy Team,
So oft as Sloth still in the Mire did stand.
Huge Routs of People did about them band,

C. 4. S. XXXVII.

So forth they marchen in this goodly sort,
To take the solace of the open Air,
And in fresh flowring Fields themselves to sport.
Emongst the rest rode that false Lady fair,
The foul Duessa,

C. 4. S. XXXVIII.

With pleasaunce of the breathing Fields yfed,

C. 5. S. I.

The noble Heart, that harbours vertuous Thought,
And is with child of glorious great Intent,
Can never rest, until it forth have brought
Th' eternal Brood of Glory excellent:

C. 5. S. II.

At last, the golden Oriental Gate
Of greatest Heaven 'gan to open fair,
And Phœbus fresh, as Bridegroom to his Mate,
Came dauncing forth, shaking his dewy Hair:

And hurles his glistring Beams through gloomy Air.
Which when the wakeful Elfe perceiv'd, straightway
He started up, and did himself prepare,
In Sun-bright Arms, and battailous array:
For with that Pagan proud he combat will that day.

C. 5. S. III.

There many Minstrels maken Melody,
To drive away the dull Melancholy,
And many Bards, that to the trembling Chord
Can tune their timely Voices cunningly,
And many Chroniclers that can record
Old Loves, and Wars for Ladies doen by many a Lord,

C. 5. S. IV.

Soon after comes the cruel Sarazin,
In woven mail all armed warily,
And sternly looks at him,

.
.

They bring them Wines of Greece, and Araby,
And dainty Spices fetch'd from furthest Ind,'

C. 5. S. V.

She is ybrought unto a paled Green,

C. 5. S. VI.

A shrilling Trumpet sounded from on high,

C. 5. S. VIII.

So th' one for Wrong, the other strives for Right:
As when a Griffon, seized of his Prey,
A Dragon fierce encountreth in his Flight,
Through widest Air making his ydle way,
That would his rightful Ravine rend away:
With hideous Horror both together smite,
And souce so sore that they the Heavens affray.

C. 5. S. XVI.

Greatly advancing his gay Chevalry.

C. 5. S. XVII.

In Wine and Oil they washen his wounds wide,
And softly 'gan embalm on every side.
And all the while, most heavenly Melody
About the Bed sweet Music did divide,
Him to beguile of Grief and Agony:
And all the while Duessa wept full bitterly.

C. 5. S. XVIII.

As when a weary Traveller, that strays
By muddy Shore of broad seven-mouthed Nile,
Unweeting of the perilous wandring ways,
Doth meet a cruel crafty Crocodile,
Which in false Grief hiding his harmful Guile,
Doth weep full sore, and sheddeth tender Tears:

C. 5. S. XX.

Before the Door her iron Chariot stood,
Already harnessed for Journy new;
And cole-black Steeds yborn of hellish Brood,
That on their rusty Bits did champ, as they were wood.

C. 5. S. XXI.

She greatly grew amazed at the sight,
And th' unacquainted Light began to fear:
(For never did such Brightness there appear)
And would have back retired to her Cave,
Until the Witch's Speech she 'gan to hear,

C. 5. S. XXII.

Or that great House of Gods Celestial,
Which wast begot in Dæmogorgon's Hall,
And saw'st the Secrets of the World unmade;

C. 5. S. XXIV.

Her feeling Speeches some Compassion mov'd
In Heart, and Change in that great Mother's Face;

C. 5. S. XXVII.

Then bowing down her aged Back, she kist
The wicked Witch;

C. 5. S. XXVIII.

Then to her iron Waggon she betakes,
And with her bears the foul well-favour'd Witch:
Through mirksome Air her ready way she makes.
Her twyfold Teme (of which, two black as Pitch,
And two were brown, yet each to each unlich)
Did softly swim away, ne ever stamp,
Unless she chaunc'd their stubborn Mouths to twitch;
Then, foaming Tarre, their Bridles they would champ,
And trampling the fine Element, would fiercely ramp.

C. 5. S. XXIX.

His cruel Wounds, with cruddy Blood congeal'd,
They binden up so wisely as they may,
And handle softly, till they can be heal'd:
So lay him in her Chariot, close in Night conceal'd.

C. 5. S. XXX.

And all the while she stood upon the Ground,
The wakeful Dogs did never cease to bay,
As giving warning of th' unwonted Sound,
With which her iron Wheels did them affray,
And her dark griesly Look them much dismay.
The Messenger of Death, the ghastly Owl,
With dreary Shrieks did her also bewray;
And hungry Wolves continually did howl
At her abhorred Face, so filthy and so foul.

C. 5. S. XXXI.

Thence turning back in silence soft they stole,
And brought the heavy Corse with easy pace

C. 5. S. XXXII.

By that same way the direful Dames do drive
Their mournful Chariot,

.
.

The trembling Ghosts with sad amazed Mood,
Chattring their Iron Teeth, and staring wide
With stony Eyes; and all the hellish Brood
Of Fiends infernal flock'd on every side,
To gaze on earthly Wight, that with the Night durst ride.

C. 5. S. XXXIII.

They pass the bitter waves of Acheron,
Where many Souls sit wailing wofully,
And come to fiery Flood of Phlegeton,

C. 5. S. XXXIV.

Before the Threshold, dreadful Cerberus
His three deformed Heads did lay along,
Curled with thousand Adders venemous,
And lilled forth his bloody flaming Tongue:
At them he 'gan to rear his Bristles strong,
And felly gnarre, until Day's Enemy
Did him appease; then down his Tail he hong,

C. 5. S. XXXVI.

Where was a Cave ywrought by wondrous Art,
Deep, dark, uneasy, doleful, comfortless,

C. 5. S. XLI.

There antient Night arriving, did alight
From her high weary Wain,

C. 5. S. XLIX.

Proud Tarquin, and too lordly Lentulus,
Stout Scipio, and stubborn Hannibal,
Ambitious Sylla, and stern Marius,
High Cesar, great Pompey, and fierce Antonius.

C. 5. S. LII.

He by a privy Postern took his Flight,

C. 6. S. I.

As when a Ship, that flies fair under Sail,
An hidden Rock escaped hath unwares,
That lay in wait her Wrack for to bewail,
The Mariner yet half amazed stares
At peril past, and yet it doubt ne dares
To joy at his fool-happy Oversight:
So doubly is distress'd 'twixt Joy and Cares
The dreadless Courage of this Elfin Knight,

C. 6. S. VII.

A Troop of Fauns and Satyrs far away
Within the Wood were dauncing in a Round,
Whiles old Sylvanus slept in shady Arbour sound:

C. 6. S. IX.

With ruffled Raiments, and fair blubbred Face,

C. 6. S. XI.

Their frowning Foreheads with rough Horns yclad,
And rustick Horror all aside do lay,
And gently grenning, shew a semblance glad
To comfort her, and Fear to put away,
Their backward bent Knees teach her humbly to obey.

C. 6. S. XIII.

They all, as glad as Birds of joyous Prime,
Thence lead her forth, about her dauncing round,
Shouting, and singing all a Shepherds Rime,
And with green Branches strowing all the Ground,
Do worship her, as Queen, with Olive Garland crown'd.

C. 6. S. XIV.

And all the way their merry Pipes they sound,
That all the Woods with double Echo ring,
And with their horned Feet do wear the Ground,
Leaping like wanton Kids in pleasant Spring.
So towards old Sylvanus they her bring;
Who, with the Noise awaked, cometh out
To weet the Cause, his weak Steps governing,
And aged Limbs on Cypres stadle stout,
And with an Ivy Twine his Waste is girt about.

C. 6. S. XV.

Far off he wonders, what them makes so glad,
If Bacchus' merry Fruit they did invent,
Or Cybel's frantick Rites have made them mad:

C. 6. S. XVI.

The Wood-born People fall before her flat,
And worship her as Goddess of the Wood;
And old Sylvanus' self bethinks not, what
To think of Wight so fair, but gazing stood,
.
.
Sometimes Diana he her takes to be,
But misseth Bow, and Shafts, and Buskins to her Knee.

C. 6. S. XVII.

But pin'd away in Anguish and self-will'd Annoy.

C. 6. S. XVIII.

The woody Nymphs, fair Hamadryades,
Her to behold do thither run apace,
And all the Troop of light-foot Naiades

C. 6. S. XIX.

Glad of such Luck, the luckless lucky Maid
Did her content to please their feeble Eyes,
And long time with that salvage People stay'd,
To gather Breath in many Miseries.

C. 6. S. XXX.

Yet evermore it was his manner fair,
After long Labours and Adventures spent,
Unto those native Woods for to repair,
To see his Sire and Offspring auntient.

C. 6. S. XXXIII.

So, on a day, when Satyres all were gone
To do their Service to Sylvanus old,

C. 6. S. XXXV.

A silly Man, in simple Weeds forworn,
And soil'd with Dust of the long dryed way;
His Sandals were with toilsome Travel torn,
And Face all tann'd with scorching sunny Ray,
As he had travell'd many a Summer's Day,
Through boiling Sands of Araby and Ind';
And in his Hand a Jacob's Staff, to stay
His weary Limbs upon:

C. 6. S. XL.

Whereas that Pagan proud himself did rest,
In secret Shadow by a Fountain side:

C. 7. S. II.

. . . whereas he weary sate
To rest himself, foreby a Fountain side,

C. 7. S. III.

He feeds upon the cooling Shade, and bays
His sweaty Forehead in the breathing Wind,
Which through the trembling Leaves full gently plays,

C. 7. S. IV.

Unkindness past, they 'gan of Solace treat,
And bathe in pleasaunce of the joyous Shade,
Which shielded them against the boiling Heat,
And with green Boughs decking a gloomy Glade,
About the Fountain, like a Garland made;
Whose bubbling Wave did ever freshly well,
Ne ever would through fervent Summer fade:

C. 7. S. VI.

And lying down upon the sandy Grail,
Drunk of the Stream, as clear as crystal Glass:

.
.

Till crudled cold his Courage 'gan assail,
And cheerful Blood in Faintness chill did melt,
Which like a Fever-fit through all his Body swelt.

C. 7. S. VII.

Yet goodly court he made still to his Dame,
Pour'd out in Looseness on the grassy Ground,

C. 7. S. X.

... his stalking Steps are staid
Upon a snaggy Oak, which he had torn
Out of his Mother's Bowels,

C. 7. S. XI.

... he 'gan advaunce
With huge Force and insupportable Main,

C. 7. S. XIII.

... and fram'd by Furies Skill,
With windy Nitre and quick Sulphur fraught,
And ram'd with Bullet round,

.
.

Through smouldry Cloud of duskish stinking Smoke,

C. 7. S. XIX.

The woful Dwarf, which saw his Master's Fall,
Whiles he had keeping of his grasing Steed,
And valient Knight become a Caitive thrall,
When all was past, took up his forlorn Weed,
His mighty Armour, missing most at need;
His silver Shield, now idle maisterless;
His poinant Spear, that many made to bleed,
The rueful Monuments of Heaviness;
And with them all departs, to tell his great Distress.

C. 7. S. XXIV.

At last, when Life recover'd had the Rein,
And over-wrestled his strong Enemy,

C. 7. S. XXVIII.

She fed her Wound with fresh renewed Bale;
Long toss'd with Storms, and bet with bitter Wind,
High over Hills, and low adown the Dale,
She wandred many a Wood, and measur'd many a Vale.

C. 7. S. XXIX.

Like glauncing Light of Phoebus' brightest Ray;
From top to toe no place appeared bare,
That deadly dint of Steel endanger may:
Athwart his Breast a Bauldrick brave he ware,
That shin'd like twinkling Stars, with Stones most precious rare.

C. 7. S. XXX.

Like Hesperus emongst the lesser Lights,

.
.

Thereby his mortal Blade full comely hong
In ivory Sheath, ycarv'd with curious slights;
Whose Hilts were burnish'd Gold, and Handle strong
Of mother Pearl, and buckled with a golden Tong.

C. 7. S. XXXI.

His haughty Helmet, horrid all with Gold,
Both glorious Brightness, and great Terror bred;
For all the Crest a Dragon did enfold
With greedy Paws, and over all did spread
His golden Wings: His dreadful hideous Head
Close couched on the Bever, seem'd to throw
From flaming Mouth bright Sparkles fiery red,
That suddain Horror to faint Hearts did show;
And scaly Tail was stretch'd adown his Back full low.

C. 7. S. XXXII.

Upon the top of all his lofty Crest,
A bunch of Hairs discolour'd diversly,
With sprinkled Pearl, and Gold full richly dress'd,
Did shake, and seem'd to daunce for Jollity,
Like to an Almond-Tree ymounted high
On top of green Selinis all alone,
With Blossoms brave bedecked daintily;
Whose tender Locks do tremble every one
At every little Breath, that under Heaven is blown.

C. 7. S. XXXVII.

His Spear of Heben Wood behind him bare,
Whose harmful Head, thrice heated in the Fire,
Had riven many a Breast with Picke-head square;
.
.
The iron Rowels into frothy Fome he bit.

C. 7. S. XXXVIII.

When as this Knight nigh to the Lady drew,
With lovely court he 'gan her entertain;
But when he heard her answers loth, he knew
Some secret Sorrow did her Heart distrain:
Which to allay, and calm her storming Pain,
Fair feeling words he wisely 'gan display,
And for her Humour fitting purpose feign,
To tempt the Cause it self for to bewray;
Wherewith emmov'd, these bleeding words she 'gan to say:

C. 7. S. XXXIX.

The careful Cold beginneth for to creep,
And in my Heart his iron Arrow steep,

C. 7. S. XLIII.

Which Phison and Euphrates floweth by,
And Gebon's golden Waves do wash continually:

C. 7. S. XLIV.

Bred in the loathly Lakes of Tartary,

C. 7. S. XLVIII.

And ye the forlorn Reliques of his Power,
His biting Sword and his devouring Spear,
Which have endured many a dreadful Stower,
Can speak his Prowess, that did earst you bear,
And well could rule:

C. 8. S. III.

Then took the Squire an Horn of Bugle small,
Which hung adown his side in twisted Gold,
And Tassels gay.

C. 8. S. IV.

Three Miles it might be easy heard around,
And Echoes three answer'd it self again:

C. 8. S. V.

In haste came rushing forth from inner Bower,
With staring Count'nance stern, as one astoun'd,
And staggering Steps, to weet what suddain Stower
Had wrought that Horror strange, and dar'd his dreaded Power.

C. 8. S. VII.

All arm'd with ragged Snubs and knotty Grain,

C. 8. S. IX.

Enroll'd in Flames, and smouldring Dreariment,

C. 8. S. XVII.

Thereat he roared for exceeding Pain,
That to have heard, great Horror would have bred;
And scourging th' empty Air with his long Train,
Through great Impatience of his grieved Head,
.
.
Came hurtling in full fierce, and forc'd the Knight retire.

C. 8. S. XXI.

... For he has read his end
In that bright Shield,

C. 8. S. XXVII.

And you fresh Bud of Vertue springing fast,

C. 8. S. XXIX.

But no Man car'd to answer to his Cry.
There reign'd a solemn silence over all,
No Voice was heard, nor Wight was seen in Bower or Hall.

C. 8. S. XXX.

At last, with creeping crooked Pace forth came
An old old Man, with Beard as white as Snow,
That on a Staff his feeble Steps did frame,
And guide his weary Gate both to and fro;
For his Eye-sight him failed long ygo:
And on his Arm a Bunch of Keys he bore,
The which unused Rust did overgrow;
Those were the Keys of every inner Door,
But he could not them use, but kept them still in store.

C. 8. S. XXXI.

For as he forward mov'd his footing old,
So backward still was turn'd his wrinkled Face:

C. 8. S. XXXII. His reverent Hairs and holy Gravity

C. 8. S. XXXVII. But in the same a little Grate was pight,
Through which he sent his Voice, and loud did call
With all his Power, to weet if living Wight
Were housed there within, whom he enlargen might.

C. 8. S. XL. Whose feeble Thighs, unable to uphold
His pined Corse,

C. 8. S. XLI. His sad dull Eyes deep sunk in hollow Pits,
Could not endure th' unwonted Sun to view:
.
His rawbone Arms, whose mighty brawned Bowers

C. 9. S. I. O Goodly golden Chain, wherewith yfere
The Vertues linked are in lovely wise;

C. 9. S. IV. His dwelling is low in a Valley green,
Under the foot of Rauran mossie hore,
From whence the River Dee, as Silver clean,
His tumbling Billows rolls with gentle rore:

C. 9. S. VIII. Ah, Love, lay down thy Bow, the whiles I may respire.

C. 9. S. XII. Of looser Life, and Heat of Hardiment,
Ranging the Forest wide on Courser free,
The Fields, the Floods, the Heavens with one Consent
Did seem to laugh on me, and favour mine intent.

C. 9. S. XIII. The verdant Grass my Couch did goodly dight,
And Pillow was my Helmet fair display'd:

C. 9. S. XV. When I awoke, and found her place devoid,
And naught but pressed Grass where she had lyen,
I sorrowed all so much, as earst I joy'd,
And washed all her place with watry Eyne.

C. 9. S. XXI. And with his winged Heels did tread the Wind,
As he had been a Foal of Pegasus his kind.

C. 9. S. XXXI. His subtle Tongue, like dropping Honey, melt'th
Into the Heart, and searcheth every Vein,
That ere one be aware, by secret Stealth
His Power is reft, and Weakness doth remain.

C. 9. S. XXXIII.

Ere long they come, where that same wicked Wight
His dwelling has, low in a hollow Cave,
Far underneath a craggy Clift ypight,
Dark, doleful, dreary, like a greedy Grave,
That still for carrion Carcasses doth crave:
On top whereof ay dwelt the ghastly Owl,
Shrieking his baleful Note, which ever drave
Far from that haunt all other chearful Fowl;
And all about it wandring Ghosts did wail and howl.

C. 9. S. XXXIV.

And all about, old Stocks and Stubs of Trees,
Whereon nor Fruit, nor Leaf was ever seen,
Did hang upon the ragged rocky Knees;
On which had many Wretches hanged been,
Whose Carcasses were scattered on the Green,

C. 9. S. XXXV.

That darksom Cave they enter, where they find
That cursed Man, low sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullen Mind;
His greazy Locks, long growen, and unbound,
Disordred hung about his Shoulders round,
And hid his Face; through which his hollow Eyne
Look'd deadly dull, and stared as astoun'd;
His raw-bone Cheeks, through Penury and Pine,
Were shrunk into his Jaws, as he did never dine.

C. 9. S. XXXVI.

His Garment, naught but many ragged Clouts,
With Thorns together pinn'd and patched was,
The which his naked Sides he wrap'd abouts;
And him beside there lay upon the Grass
A dreary Corse, whose Life away did pass,
All wallow'd in his own yet luke-warm Blood,

C. 9. S. XL.

... lays the Soul to sleep in quiet Grave?

C. 9. S. LI.

But when as none of them he saw him take,
He to him raught a Dagger sharp and keen,
And gave it him in hand: his Hand did quake,
And tremble like a Leaf of Aspin green,
And troubled Blood through his pale Face was seen
To come and go; with Tydings from the Heart,
As it a running Messenger had been.

C. 10. S. V.

With Looks full lowly cast, and Gate full slow,
Wont on a Staff his feeble Steps to stay,

C. 10. S. VI.

Each goodly thing is hardest to begin:
But entred in, a spacious Court they see,
Both plain and pleasant to be walked in,
Where them does meet a Franklin fair and free,
And entertains with comely courteous Glee;

C. 10. S. VII.

There fairly them receives a gentle Squire,
Of mild Demeanure, and rare Courtesy,
Right cleanly clad in comely sad Attire;
In Word and Deed that shew'd great Modesty,
And knew his Good to all of each degree,
Hight Reverence. He them with Speeches meet
Does fair entreat; no courting Nicety,
But simple, true, and eke unfeigned sweet,

C. 10. S. XII.

Thus as they 'gan of sundry things devise,
Lo! two most goodly Virgins came in place,
Ylinked arm in arm in lovely wise,
With Countenance demure, and modest Grace,
They numbred even Steps, and equal Pace:
Of which the eldest, that Fidelia hight,
Like sunny Beams threw from her crystal Face,
That could have daz'd the rash Beholder's Sight,

C. 10. S. XIII.

She was arrayed all in lilly White,
And in her right Hand bore a Cup of Gold,
With Wine and Water fill'd up to the height,
In which a Serpent did himself enfold,
That Horrour made to all that did behold;
But she no whit did change her constant Mood:
And in her other Hand she fast did hold
A Book, that was both sign'd and seal'd with Blood,

C. 10. S. XIV.

Upon her Arm a silver Anchor lay,
Whereon she leaned ever, as befel;
And ever up to Heav'n, as she did pray,
Her steadfast Eyes were bent, ne swerved other way.

C. 10. S. XV.

Then to the Knight, with shamefac'd Modesty,
They turn themselves, at Una's meek Request,
And him salute with well-beseeming Glee;
Who fair them quites, as him beseemed best,
And goodly can discourse of many a noble Gest.

C. 10. S. XXXI.

Adorn'd with Gems and Owches wondrous fair,
Whose passing Price uneath was to be told;
And by her side there sate a gentle Pair
Of turtle Doves, she sitting in an Ivory Chair.

C. 10. S. XXXIX.

The Plumes of Pride, and Wings of Vanity,

C. 10. S. XLVI.

On top whereof, a sacred Chappel was,
And eke a little Hermitage thereby,
Wherein an aged holy man did lie,

C. 10. S. XLVII.

Great Grace that old Man to him given had;
For God he often saw from Heaven's height.
× All were his earthly Eyen both blunt and bad,
And through great Age had lost their kindly Sight,
Yet wondrous quick and pierceant was his Spright,
As Eagle's Eye, that can behold the Sun.

× Milton [Written in Keats's handwriting.]

C. 10. S. XLVIII.

With snowy Locks adown his Shoulders shed,
As hoary Frost with Spangles doth attire
The mossy Branches of an Oak half dead.

C. 10. S. LIII.

That blood-red Billows like a walled Front
On either side disparted with his Rod,
Till that his Army dry-foot through them yod,
Dwelt forty Days upon; where, writ in Stone
With bloody Letters by the Hand of God,
The bitter Doom of Death and baleful Moan
He did receive, whiles flashing Fire about him shone.

C. 10. S. LIV.

Or like that sacred Hill, whose head full high,
Adorn'd with fruitful Olives all around,
Is, as it were for endless Memory
Of that dear Lord, who oft thereon was found,
For ever with a flowring Garland crown'd:
Or like that pleasant Mount, that is for ay
Through famous Poets Verse each where renown'd,
On which the thrice three learned Ladies play
Their heavenly Notes, and make full many a lovely Lay.

C. 10. S. LV.

Cannot describe, nor wit of Man can tell;
Too high a Ditty for my simple song:
The City of the great King hight it well,

C. 10. S. LXI.

Saint George of Merry England, the sign of Victory. !

C. 11. S. I.

And in her modest manner thus bespake;

C. 11. S. IV.

Where stretch'd he lay upon the sunny side
Of a great Hill, himself like a great Hill.

C. 11. S. V.

The Nurse of Time, and everlasting Fame,

C. 11. S. VI.

O gently come into my feeble Breast,
Come gently, but not with that mighty Rage,
Where-with the Martial Troops thou dost infest,
And Hearts of great Heroes doth enrage,
That naught their Kindled Courage may assuage;

Soon as thy dreadful Trump begins to sound,
The God of War with his fierce Equipage
Thou dost awake, sleep never he so sound,

C. II. S. VII.

Fair Goddess lay that furious Fit aside,
Till I of Wars and bloody Mars do sing,
And Briton Fields with Sarazin Blood bedy'd,
Twixt that great Fairy-Queen and Paynim King,
That with their horror Heaven and Earth did ring,
A work of labour long, and endles praise:
But, now a while let down that haughty String,

C. II. S. VIII.

By this, the dreadful Beast drew nigh to hand,
Half flying, and half footing in his haste,
That with his largeness measured much Land,
And made wide Shadow under his huge Waste;
As Mountain doth the Valley over-cast.
Approaching nigh, he reared high afore
His Body monstrous, horrible, and vast,
Which (to increase his wondrous Greatness more)
Was Swoln with Wrath, and Poison, and with bloody Gore.

C. II. S. IX.

Which as an Eagle, seeing Prey appear,
His airy Plumes doth rouze, full rudely dight,
So shaked he, that Horror was to hear:
For, as the clashing of an Armour bright,
Such noise his rouzed Scales did send unto the Knight.

C. II. S. X.

His flaggy Wings when forth he did display,
Were like two Sails, in which the hollow Wind
Is gathered full, and worketh speedy way:

C. II. S. XI.

His huge long Tail, wound up in hundred Folds,
Does over-spread his long Brass-scaly Back;
Whose wreathed Boughts when ever he unfolds,
And thick entangled Knots adown does slack;
Bespotted all with Shields of red and black,
It sweepeth all the Land behind him far,

C. II. S. XIII.

And that more wondrous was, in either Jaw
Three ranks of iron Teeth enranged were,
In which, yet trickling Blood and Gobbets raw

C. II. S. XIV.

(His blazing Eyes)
As two broad Beacons, set in open Fields,
Send forth their Flames far off to every Shire,

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But far within, as in a hollow Glade,
Those glaring Lamps were set, that made a dreadful Shade.

C. II. S. XV.

So dreadfully he towards him did pass,
Forelifting up aloft his speckled Breast,
And often bounding on the bruised Grass,
As for great joyance of his new-come Guest.
Eftsoons he 'gan advance his haughty Crest,
As chauffed Boar his Bristles doth uprear,
And shook his Scales to Battel ready drest;
That made the Red-cross Knight nigh quake for fear,

C. II. S. XVIII.

Then with his waving Wings displayed wide,
Himself up high he lifted from the ground,
And with strong Flight did forcibly divide
The yielding Air, which nigh too feeble found
Her flitting parts, and Element unsound,
To bear so great a weight: he cutting way
With his broad Sails, about him soared round;
At last, low stouping with unwieldy sway,
Snatch'd up both Horse and Man, to bear them quite away.

C. II. S. XIX.

Long he them bore above the subject Plain
So far as Yewen Bow a Shaft may send,

C. II. S. XXI.

The rolling Billows beat the ragged Shore,
As they the Earth would shoulder from her Seat;

C. II. S. XXIII.

His hideous Tail then hurled he about,
And there with all enwrapt the nimble Thighs
Of the froth-fomy Steed,

C. II. S. XXVIII.

Faint, weary, sore, emboyled, grieved, brent
With Heat, Toil, Wounds, Arms, Smart, and inward Fire.

C. II. S. XXXI.

Now 'gan the golden Phœbus for to steep
His fiery Face in Billows of the West,
And his faint Steeds water'd in Ocean deep,

C. II. S. XXXIV.

As Eagle fresh out of the Ocean Wave,
Where he hath left his Plumes all hoary grey,
And deck'd himself with Feathers youthly gay,
Like Eyas Hawk up mounts unto the Skies,
His newly budded Pinions to assay,
And marvels at himself, still as he flies:

C. 11. S. LI.

Her golden Locks for haste were loosely shed
About her Ears, when Una her did mark
Climb to her Charet, all with flowers spred;
From Heaven high, to chace the chearless Dark,

C. 11. S. LIV.

So down he fell, and forth his Life did breathe,
That vanish'd into Smoak and Cloudes swift;
So down he fell, that th' Earth him underneath
Did groan, as feeble so great Load to lift;
So down he fell, as an huge rocky Clift,
Whose false Foundation Waves have wash'd away,
With dreadful Poise is from the main Land rift,
And rolling down, great Neptune doth dismay;
So down he fell, and like an heaped Mountain lay.

C. 12. S. I.

Behold, I see the Haven nigh at hand,
To which I mean my weary Course to bend;
Vere the main Shete, and bear up with the Land,
The which afore is fairly to be kend,
And seemeth safe from Storms, that may offend:
There this fair Virgin, weary of her way,
Must landed be, now at her Journey's end;
There eke my feeble Bark awhile may stay,
Till merry Wind and Weather call her thence away.

C. 12. S. II.

Scarcely had Phœbus, in the glooming East,
Yet harnessed his fiery-footed Teem,

C. 12. S. III.

Up rose with hasty Joy, and feeble Speed
That aged Sire,

C. 12. S. V.

Forth came that ancient Lord and aged Queen,
Array'd in antique Robes down to the Ground,
And sad Habiliments right well beseen;

C. 12. S. VI.

And in their Hands sweet Tymbrels all upheld on hight.

C. 12. S. VII.

As fair Diana, in fresh Summer's Day,
Beholds her Nymphs, enrang'd in shady Wood,
Some wrestle, some do run, some bathe in crystal Flood:

C. 12. S. VIII.

Then on her Head they set a Girland green,
And crowned her 'twixt Earnest and 'twixt Game;

C. 12. S. X.

Or in his Womb might lurk some hidden Nest
Of many Dragonets, his fruitful Seed:

C. 12. S. XI.

One Mother, when as her fool-hardy Child
Did come too near, and with his Talants play,

Half dead through fear, her little Babe revil'd,
And to her Gossips gan in counsel say;

C. 12. S. XIII. With Shaumes, and Trumpets, and with Clarions sweet;

C. 12. S. XVI. That godly King and Queen did passionate,

C. 12. S. XXII. So fair and fresh, as freshest Flower in May;
For she had laid her mournful Stole aside,
And, Widow-like sad Wimple thrown away,

C. 12. S. XXXVIII. Then 'gan they sprinkle all the Posts with Wine,
And made great Feast, to solemnize that Day;
They all perfum'd with Frankincense Divine,
And precious Odours fetch'd from far away,
That all the House did sweat with great Array:
And all the while sweet Music did apply
Her curious Skill, the warbling Notes to play,
To drive away the dull Melancholy;

C. 12. S. XXXIX. During the which there was an heavenly Noise
Heard sound through all the Palace pleasantly,
Like as it had been many an Angel's Voice,
Singing before th' eternal Majesty,
In their trinal Triplicities on high;
Yet wist no Creature, whence that heavenly Sweet
Proceeded:

C. 12. S. XLII. Now strike your Sails, ye jolly Mariners;
For we be come unto a quiet Rode,
Where we must land some of our Passengers,
And light this weary Vessel of her Load.
Here she awhile may make her safe Abode,
Till she repaired have her Tackles spent,
And Wants supply'd. And then again abroad
On the long Voyage whereto she is bent;
Well may she speed, and fairly finish her Intent.

A COPY OF THE *POEMS*, 1817, GIVEN BY KEATS TO HIS BROTHER GEORGE[1]

On the title-page is an inscription in Keats's handwriting: "From J. K. to his affectionate Brother George."

On page 17, in the *Specimen of an Induction to a Poem*, the word "knight" has three ink lines drawn through it and the word "steed" written above.

The marks and underscorings are all in *I stood Tip-toe Upon a Little Hill*. They were probably made by George, but undoubtedly represent the

[1] Author's Collection.

opinions of all three brothers. As in the *Fairy Queen*, these marks are copied exactly. Unmarked passages are preserved only when the continuity of the sense demands their inclusion.

p. 1.

I stood tip-toe upon a little hill,
The air was cooling, and so very still,
That the sweet buds which with a modest pride
Pull droopingly, in slanting curve aside,
Their scantly leaved, and finely tapering stems,
Had not yet lost those starry diadems
Caught from the early sobbing of the morn.
The clouds were pure and white as flocks new shorn,
And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly they slept
On the blue fields of heaven, and then there crept
A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves:

p. 2.

Of a fresh woodland alley, never ending;
Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,
Guess where the jaunty streams refresh themselves.

p. 2–3.

A bush of May flowers with the bees about them;
Ah, sure no tasteful nook would be without them;
And let a lush laburnum oversweep them,
And let long grass grow round the roots to keep them
Moist, cool and green; and shade the violets,
That they may bind the moss in leafy nets.

p. 3.

A filbert hedge with wild briar overtwined,
And clumps of woodbine taking the soft wind
Upon their summer thrones;

p. 3–4.

Round which is heard a spring-head of clear waters
Babbling so wildly of its lovely daughters
The spreading blue bells: it may haply mourn
That such fair clusters should be rudely torn
From their fresh beds, and scattered thoughtlessly
By infant hands, left on the path to die.

Open afresh your round of starry folds,
Ye ardent marigolds!
Dry up the moisture of your golden lids,
For great Apollo bids
That in these days your praises should be sung
On many harps, which he has lately strung;
And when again your dewiness he kisses,
Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses:
So haply when I rove in some far vale,
His mighty voice may come upon the gale.

p. 4.

Here are sweet-peas, on tip-toe for a flight:

With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,
And taper fingers catching at all things,
To bind them all about with tiny rings.

p. 4.

How silent comes the water round that bend;
Not the minutest whisper does it send

p. 5–6.

Where swarms of minnows show their little heads,
Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams,
To taste the luxury of sunny beams
Temper'd with coolness. How they ever wrestle
With their own sweet delight, and ever nestle
Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand.
If you but scantily hold out the hand,
That very instant not one will remain;
But turn your eye, and they are there again.
The ripples seem right glad to reach those cresses,
And cool themselves among the em'rald tresses;
The while they cool themselves, they freshness give,
And moisture, that the bowery green may live:
So keeping up an interchange of favours,
Like good men in the truth of their behaviours.
Sometimes goldfinches one by one will drop
From low hung branches; little space they stop;
But sip, and twitter, and their feathers sleek;
Then off at once, as in a wanton freak:
Or perhaps, to show their black, and golden wings,
Pausing upon their yellow flutterings.

p. 6.

Than the soft rustle of a maiden's gown
Fanning away the dandelion's down;
Than the light music of her nimble toes
Patting against the sorrel as she goes.

p. 6.

And as she leaves me may she often turn
Her fair eyes looking through her locks auburne.

p. 7.

Or by the moon lifting her silver rim
Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim
Coming into the blue with all her light.
O Maker of sweet poets, dear delight
Of this fair world, and all its gentle livers;
Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,
Mingler with leaves, and dew and tumbling streams,
Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams,
Lover of loneliness, and wandering,
Of upcast eye, and tender pondering!

p. 8.

In the calm grandeur of a sober line,
We see the waving of the mountain pine;

And when a tale is beautifully staid,
We feel the safety of a hawthorn glade:
When it is moving on luxurious wings,
The soul is lost in pleasant smotherings:
Fair dewy roses brush against our faces,
And flowering laurels spring from diamond vases;
O'er head we see the jasmine and sweet briar,
And bloomy grapes laughing from green attire;

p. 8–9.

What Psyche felt, and Love, when their full lips
First touch'd; what amorous, and fondling nips
They gave each other's cheeks; with all their sighs,
And how they kist each other's tremulous eyes;
The silver lamp, — the ravishment, — the wonder —
The darkness, — loneliness, — the fearful thunder;
Their woes gone by, and both to heaven upflown,
To bow for gratitude before Jove's throne.

p. 9.

And garlands woven of flowers wild, and sweet,
Upheld on ivory wrists, or sporting feet:
Telling us how fair, trembling Syrinx fled
Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread.
Poor nymph, — poor Pan, how he did weep to find,
Nought but a lovely sighing of the wind
Along the reedy stream; a half heard strain,
Full of sweet desolation — balmy pain.

p. 10.

In some delicious ramble, he had found
A little space, with boughs all woven round;
And in the midst of all, a clearer pool
Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool,
The blue sky here, and there, serenely peeping
Through tendril wreaths fantastically creeping.
And on the bank a lonely flower he spied,
A meek and forlorn flower, with naught of pride,
Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clearness,
To woo its own sad image into nearness:
Deaf to light Zephyrus it would not move;
But still would seem to droop, to pine, to love.
So while the Poet stood in this sweet spot,
Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy shot;
Nor was it long ere he had told the tale
Of young Narcissus, and sad Echo's bale.

p. 11.

That aye refreshing, pure deliciousness,
Coming ever to bless
The wanderer by moonlight? to him bringing
Shapes from the invisible world, unearthly singing
From out the middle air, from flowery nests,

And from the pillowy silkiness that rests
Full in the speculation of the stars.

p. 11–12. He was a Poet, sure a lover too,
Who stood on Latmus' top, what time there blew
Soft breezes from the myrtle vale below;
And brought in faintness solemn, sweet, and slow
A hymn from Dian's temple; while upswelling,
The incense went to her own starry dwelling.
But though her face was clear as infant's eyes,
Though she stood smiling o'er the sacrifice,
The Poet wept at her so piteous fate,
Wept that such beauty should be desolate:
So in fine wrath some golden sounds he won,
And gave meek Cynthia her Endymion.

p. 12. Where distant ships do seem to show their keels,
Phoebus awhile delayed his mighty wheels.

p. 13. Stepping like Homer at the trumpet's call,
Or young Apollo on the pedestal:
And lovely women were as fair and warm,
As Venus looking sideways in alarm.

p. 13–14. And springing up, they met the wond'ring sight
Of their dear friends, nigh foolish with delight;
Who feel their arms, and breasts, and kiss and stare,
And on their placid foreheads part the hair.
Young men and maidens at each other gaz'd
With hands held back, and motionless, amaz'd
To see the brightness in each other's eyes;
And so they stood, fill'd with a sweet surprise.
Until their tongues were loos'd in poesy.
Therefore no lover did of anguish die:
But the soft numbers, in that moment spoken,
Made silken ties, that never may be broken.
Cynthia! I cannot tell the greater blisses,
That follow'd thine, and thy dead shepherd's kisses:
Was there a Poet born? — but now no more,
My wand'ring spirit must no further soar. —

THE ROGVE: OR, THE LIFE GUZMAN DE ALFARACHE.[1]

WRITTEN IN SPANISH BY MATHEO ALEMAN.

THE THIRD EDITION CORRECTED. LONDON. 1634.

There are a number of Dedications at the beginning of the book. At the top of the page of the Dedication "To Don Francisco De Roias, Marquesse

[1] In the possession of The Authors' Club, New York.

de Poza" is written in Rice's handwriting: "Purchased by me A. D. 1819 — and given to John Keats and upon his death 1821 — returned to me. Rice."

On the last page of another Dedication: "To the Vulgar," this passage in the text is marked: "the high moralities of diviner wits."

On the top margin of the first page of the book proper is written in Rice's handwriting:

"John Keats
From his Friend
Jᵉ Rxxx
20th April 1818."

The scorings in the text are given exactly as they appear in the book. Italicized words are so in the text and do not refer to Keats's marks, which are indicated by a line, the method he himself employed.

p. 3 | he drew admirable Land-skips, and other representations of things afarre of, as clouds in the Aire, streaks in the skie, and other fiery colours of the heavens, occasioned by the reflex of the Sun-setting beams, ruinated buildings, and other diversity of rare Architecture. And in the lower part, nearest to the ground, he had graced his worke with many fine Groves, dainty Flowres, greene Meddowes, and craggy Rockes.

p. 4 | when you intreat them to recite what they know in this, or that other thing: or to report what they have heard, or seene; or to tell you the truth and substance of a businesse, to prepare colours to slicke it over, and to paint and disguize it, that you can no more know the face of it, than the countenance of an old Hag, that is plaistred over with painting. Every one gives his shadowings after his owne fancy: one while amplifying; another while moving passion, sometimes disannulling, and sometimes diverting, as the humour takes him.

p. 4 *rapsodie* of things hudled one on the neck of another,

p. 4 | if it lay in our hands to make our owne choice (but beggers must be no choosers) out of that masse of *Adam*, and first lump of flesh, I would have scrambled hard for one of the best morsels, though I had beene forced to goe to Cuffes for it: But there is no helpe for that; Every man must be content with that which fals to his lot:

p. 5 | Many times he himselfe heard that reproachfull word as he past along the streets, it could not escape his eare, yet he was of that good nature, and gentle condition, that he tooke no notice of it, but slightly past it over.

p. 5 | When a man shall pray, frequent vertuous exercises, heare divine Service, confesse his sinnes, and often communicate; for men to say, that such a one is an Hypocrite, I can by no means indure it:

p. 8 | I did looke for this conclusion from thee; assuring my selfe before-

hand, that thou wouldst take them all to be old Wives tales, when they meet at the Bake-house to set their bread into the Oven.

p. 8–9 Here my Cart stickes fast, and is so clogg'd with durt and myre, and so surrounded and wedged in as it were, on every side with filth and mucke, that I know not in the world how to get it out, unlesse the Angell of God returne once againe to the fish-poole. I confesse (my Lords) that for these thirty yeeres and upwards, I have seene and heard the Confessions of many sinners; who having falne into one sinne, have falne againe many times into the sam. And yet all these, (by God's helpe, and his goodnesse and mercy towards them) have reformed both their lives and consciences, and become good livers, and have all put on amendment. The Wencher that hath lyen at racke and manger, and stood at continuall Livery, time, and a filthy Queane hath tam'd him. The Gamester, a master of a Dicing house, or Keeper of an Ordinary, makes him in the end to see his errour; who like a Horse-leech, goes from one to another sucking by little and little their blood from them. To day thou winnest, to morrow thou losest; the money runnes round, and still it remaineth; but they that play, I am sure remaine without it. The famousest Thiefe, feare and shame reformeth. The rash Railer, the Palsie, for which few escape. The proud man, his owne miserie doth dis-deceive him, being conscious to himselfe, that he is but durt. The Lyer, the ill language, and the affronts, which are daily cast in his teeth, put a bridle upon his tongue. The unadvised Blasphemer, the continuall reprehensions of his friends and kinsfolkes correct and amend him. All these, either early or late, at one time or another, reape some fruit, and cast off (like the Snake) their old skinne, although perhaps (within) they wring hard for it.

In all and every one of these have I found some markes, and signes of their salvation: Onely in the Scrivener, I misse in my account, and am quite out of my reckoning, nor doe I finde in him any amendment at all; but is just the same man to day, that he was yesterday; this yeere, as he was thirty yeeres since; for he is still one and the selfe-same man: Nor do I know to whom, or how he confesseth, nor who absolveth him: (I speake of him, who doth not faithfully exercise his Office) for they informe, and write downe that, which they thinke fit, and for two ducats, or to pleasure a friend, or to do a shee creature a courtesie (for your mantles, are great medlars, and your Women, not the worst solicitours).

p. 9 and for that the money that is put into the palmes of their hands, their fist being well greased therewith, is in an instant converted into flesh and bloud, and incorporated into one and the selfe-same substance with themselves; they have no more power to cast it off from them, than they have to shake of the World, or the devill, who sit so close unto them, that they can hardly be removed.

p. 9 then will he tell you that these are the rates of old, & that they take no more but their wonted fees, that victuals and other things grow

still dearer and dearer, & the meanes to maintaine them, worse and worse: That the Kings rents and prices are variable; that they had not their Offices for nothing, but payd soundly for them; and therefore must licke himselfe whole as well as he can,

p. 10 And after that they once grow warme in their places,

p. 10 There is not a pore or joynt in all his body, but is either a mouth to swallow, or a paw to take hold, if you once come within his clutches. Here he seaseth on Wheat, there on Barley; here Wine, there Oile, besides flitches of Bacon, cloathes both wollen and linnen, silkes of all sorts, Iewels, Money, from the Hangings in the dining Chamber, to stoope so low as the spice-box in the Kitchin; from the Masters bed, to the Mules cratch; from the purest Wheat in the granary; to the very Straw and Chaffe that lies at the Barnes doore, choosing rather to play at small game, than to sit out. From which terrible griping, and violent hold-fast, nothing can un-hitch them but deaths flesh-hooke. For, when the hand takes a bribe, and they once begin to be corrupted, there is no ho with them, they are marred for ever after by an evill use, and never come to be good. And so they receive with open hand all manner of bribes, as if they were men in pay, and what they wrongfully take, were true wages, and lawfull fees.

p. 10 So that they have two *Genii*, (as men for the more surety will have two strings to their Bow:) the Court *Genius*, which is the Protectour of their bodily goods, and Gods good Angell, that is, the Protectour of their soules.

p. 11 the *Chancery*, which is one of the famousest buildings (for its bignesse) that is in all Spaine; and whereunto (for not onely the curiousnesse of the Arches and Vaults, but for the faire carriage of businesse) there is not any in these times knowne to be equall unto it:

p. 11 But it would seeme somewhat strange, that a man should have a sentence goe on his side, that hath not wit to defend his cause. But my father found sentence in his favour, because he had beene beaten to those kinde of businesses, and knew the trace of them, and was well able to hold plea.

p. 13 [Of women's painting themselves.] And (which to see, is a thousand pitties) that your foule, and worst favoured women, are not onely those that doe this, but even your fairest, and those that are most beholding to Nature: ×

[Keats put a cross at the end of the line, as here, and wrote in the margin — the page has been cut and I have added probable words in brackets]: "the original sens[e] of the mos[t] beholding used as

indebted — na[ture] beholding nature th[at] is most fit [to] be beheld [by] the eye of na[ture].'

p. 14 | the cards once more were delt round againe, and he came into very good play.

p. 15 | Her handsome feature needs no other commender, than it self.

p. 15 | She was that Knights Pawne; his jewell, his delight, a morsell that he kept for his owne mouth, over whom he was wondrous wary,

p. 15 that their little Caskets may be stored with Boxes of Marmalet;

p. 15 | he did ever manifest his faith by his works, because they should not condemne it to be dead and fruitlesse.

p. 16 | faine shee would, but durst not; she had a good mind to the businesse, but yet she was afraid: she was sometimes on, sometimes off; her owne heart was the Oracle of her desires; with that she consulted often, what were best to doe. And thus disputing *pro* and *con* with herselfe, *ya lo zenia de la haz, ya delenues*. Sometimes (as we see in the handling of Stuffes, or of Cloth) she was on the right, sometimes on the wrong: one while she would put on a full resolution to doe thus and thus; by and by againe, she would turne to a new Conjugation, and vary the Mood she was in before.

p. 16 but her great wisedome, and long experience, which was hereditary unto her, and suckt from her mother's teat.

p. 16 | I am therein like unto the Candle, or the Sunne in its brightnesse, though I lend light unto others, I have nothing the lesse my selfe: I shall not want a whit in my estate, but be rather still at the full. Of whom I have received so many courtesies, so many gifts, it is fit, I should in some sort shew my selfe thankfull, and not be sparing to him, that hath beene so bountifull to me. Shall I be covetous, when he is so liberall? God forbid. I am now resolved what to do: I will sow my bagge at both ends, my jawes shall grind on both sides, my chaps shall walke every way; and the better to secure my shipp, I will have two anchors to one bottome; that if I should chance to lose the one, I might still have another remaining to serve my turne. And if the mansion-house should chance to fall, yet if the Dove-house hold up, if that stand fast, we shall lacke no Pigeons,

p. 17 | She feigned such extremities of torture, made such pittifull faces, and such wofull gestures (holding her hands as hard as she could for her life upon her belly, crushing and wringing it with all the might and maine she could:) then would she let them loose againe, then claspe them together, and wring each finger through anguish of her

pain: other-while she would hang the head, as if she were fainting and ready to swoune;

p. 18 Yet was shee a dissembling Hilding, a crafty old Carrion, one that had learned her lesson before-hand, and received her instructions from my father, so that shee was well prepared for the business. Besides, shee was no Dullard, and for such kinde of imployments she was no Baby, but understood very well in such services as these what was fit to be done.

And herein (amongst other things) the rich have this advantage of the poore, That evill servants will not so easily come to the becke and bend of a poore Master, as well-disposed servants will be over-awed by a rich Master, and wonne to his lewd commands. The poore man (though he be never so honest) yet must he yeeld sometimes to the violent disposition of his wilfull and head-strong servants; whereas honest Countrey Swaines, over commanded by their rich Land-lords, become Ministers to their lustfulnesse. So that the poore (though never so good) having ill servants, are servants to their servants. And the rich (though never so bad) by being served with good servants, are the onely men that are well served.

My good old woman had by this time opened the gate, and either not well remembring, or making show as if she had not knowne them.

p. 18 O what a griefe it is to see, that any pain should prove so unhappy, as to be thus ill imploy'd upon so sweet a face,

p. 19 (honest Cuckold as hee was).

p. 20 And with a bended brow and angry looke, casting her eye a-skew upon him with a coynesse of language, she turned a-side from him, accenting her words in a pretty kinde of mournfull fashion, pittying as it were and bemoaning her selfe;

p. 20 × his voice lowd and shrill, but not very cleere:

[Beside this line, Keats put an × in the margin, and at the bottom margin of the page wrote] "This puts me in mind of Fielding's Fanny 'whose teeth were white but uneven,' it is the same sort of personality. The great Man in this way is Chaucer."

p. 21 to assist there more, where it loves, than where it lives.

p. 21 The conversation went forward, Cards are call'd for, and to play they goe. Their game was *Primera* at three hands; my mother, shee got the money, for my father was willing to lose to her: and it beginning now to waxe night, they gave off play, and went out into the garden to take the ayre. In the meane while, the Cloth was layd, and their supper brought in, and set on the boord: they sit downe, then eate and have supp'd. And having given order against after supper, that a Barge should bee made ready for them, and

tricked up with fresh flagges, and green boughs: when they came to the water side, they tooke Boat, and were no sooner lanched foorth into the channell, but they might heare from other Vessels, which went too and fro upon the River, sundry Consorts of all sorts of Musicke, which made a most melodious sound; being an usuall ordinary thing with them, in such a place, and such a time

p. 22 an Easterling, dyed into a *Genouese*, and dipt in the Fat of Vsury, who knew well enough, how to put out his money to the best profit; who could cleare you any account could liquidate and divide it to an haire, how much losse there was in measure, from the wastings that arose from the winnowing, and cleansing of corn; how many graines lost in the refining of such a proportion or quantity of Metall; nay, he could tell you to a crumme, how much losse there was in an hundred dozen, between the bread that was broken with the hand, and that which was cut with the knife.

p. 22 . . . Shee ran thorow the whole course of her Art, and did all her Exercise for her degree of a Whore; which shee had laudably taken, by making her appointments between the two Quires, and the Naves, or Isles of the old Church.

p. 22 My mother, young, faire, and full of wit, and knew so well how to provoke his appetite upon all occasions, that his disorder opened the doore to his death: for the old Lad, by over-doing himselfe, hastened his owne end. First, his stomacke began to faile him, then he was taken with a paine in his head, after that followed a burning fever, which after some few fits began to leave him; but though that ceased, he had never a whit the more minde to his meate, he could eate nothing: so little by little he consumed away, and after some few pulls, he died. My mother not being able to restore him to life, though shee would ever sweare unto him, that shee was his life, and he hers: But all that protestation proved to bee but a lie; for he was buried, yet shee still lived.

p. 23 But my mother, as she churned the milke, so she was her owne carver; she was the Tayler to cut out her owne coat, and the worker of her owne fortune.

p. 23 And howbeit the Act were not lawfull, yet the Compact was justifiable. It was not lawfull for her to play the whore, yet might she by Law have whatever was promised her for the use of her body.

[Beside this, in the margin, Keats wrote] "A semi-paradox."

p. 23 Since by eating by ounces, and drinking by thimble-fuls, they live by drams;

p. 24 What a Saint *Iohn* the Evangelist am I become on the sudden, that I read you such a Lecture? The Oven grew hot, my zeale was kindled, and so these good flashes flew forth; you may the better par-

don this fault in me, because I have made you some amends in being so short. As it came in my fingers, I tooke it along with me; it came in my way, and I could not let it slippe: so shall I doe hereafter, as often as occasion is offered.

p. 24 For if thou be clad in a neat Sut of cloathes, and that they sit well upon thee, it is not materiall, whether thy Taylour were crooke-back't or no.

p. 24 I was betweene three and foure yeeres old: and by the recknings and rules of your feminine knowledge, I had two fathers: for my mother was so well learned in her Art, that she knew very well how to father me on them both. She had attained to the knowledge of working impossibilities, as plainely was to be seene, since she had the cunning to serve two Masters, and to please two husbands; to both of them giving good contentment. Both of them did acknowledge me to be their sonne; the one sayd, I was his; so did the other. And when the Knight was alone by himselfe, my mother would tel him, that I was as like him, as if I had beene spit out of his mouth & that two Egges were not liker one another, than I was like him. When againe, she talked with my father, she would tell him that I was his *alter ego*, that he and I were one, and so would have seemed, if our heads had beene cut off, and laid in a Charger: and that I was himselfe, made lesse; and did so truly resemble him, as if my head had stood upon his shoulders. But I wonder a God, in this resemblance of mine, (which a blind man might discerne at the first blush) that the mystery thereof was not discovered; that they found not out her craft,

p. 25 It is an old saying, that two is one; one, none; and three Roguery.

p. 25 × And it is much better for me this way, than that people should say; that I am ill borne and the son of no man.
[Beside this sentence, Keats put an ×.]

p. 25 For they knew no other name that shee had, save the Commendadora;

p. 25 and a foole understands more in his owne, than a wise man in another mans house.

p. 25 it is but a touch, and now we go on.

p. 26 My mother was a storer, a thrifty Wench, one on that could hold her owne; she was no waster but still lay on the saving hand:

p. 26 it was unto him like a peece of Weake, or Cotton in a Lampe, dipt in Oile; he began to give light afresh; he spent bravely, got him a Caroche, and a *Silla de manos*, a little chaire to carry with hands, borne with girthes upon mens shoulders, as well for ease as state. Not so much for any longing that my mother had thereunto, as for

his owne ostentation and glory, that the world might not take notice of the weaknesse of his Estate, or that he was going down the winde.

p. 27 And she would rather die and starve for hunger, than bate an Ace of her former height or faile one quilate in the touch or finenesse of her punctuality.

p. 27 my mother was her mothers owne daughter, and trode just in her steps; shee set her Samplar before her, that shee might draw out some good worke from thence, so that she went along in the very same path that shee did, save only in that of her child-bearing; for my Grandmother brought forth a daughter for her comfort.

p. 27 nay, to colour the busines the better, she would go a little farther in counterfetting markes and moles in the face, and other spots in other parts to that purpose; not wanting to tell some, that shee did spit like them, and that she had it naturally from them. She had this (as shee was excellent in many) cunning tricke with her, that when any of her sweet-hearts were present with her, she would call her after his Sir-name. And if two, or more were there at the same time, she called her barely by her owne name, without any addition. Her proper name was *Marcella*, which was burnished and furbished over with the title of *Don*, set over the head of it; for as she was called *Donna Marcella;* so had she her *Don* or *Cavellero* for her servant. For *Donna*, without *Don*, are lesse compatible, and lesse comely, than a house, without a bed; a Mill, without a wheele; or a body, without a shadow. As for her Sir-names, seeing they were things that meerely depended upon her mothers owne free choice and election; and for that she was uncertaine thereof, because she could not well tell who was the true father to her daughter: I must therefore give you to know, that she did bolster her up and under-prop her, with the best titular names shee could devise, throwing more noble houses upon her, than a king of *Arines* could conferre with all his farre-fetcht pedigrees. Which to repeat unto you, where to reckon up a Bead-roll of Genealogies, as long as any Letany, that is solemnly sung at divine service.

The *Guzmans* were those, unto whom she most inclined, (for she had a great liking to that name.)

p. 28 Or if, as I was the only sonne of my Mother, it had beene my good hap to have had a Sister, to have serv'd a prop to my Mother, as a staffe to her old age, as a piller to our poverty, and as a port to our often shiprackes, wee would have bid a figge in Fortunes teeth.

p. 29 I was a fat plumpe Lad, well fed, and cocker'd up, bred in *Sevill*, never checkt, chid, nor corrected by my Father: My Mother (as you have heard) a Widdow-woman, my selfe cramm'd with Collops of Bacon, your finest Bread, and your daintiest Creame; your sops of Honey steep't in Rose-water, more lookt on, and adored, than a Merchant of *Toledo*, or at least as good a man as he,

p. 31 O good God, how did her stinking breath annoy me! with her very touching of me, me thought I had drawne old age upon me, the attraction was so sensible to my seeming.

p. 32 For it is as proper to him that is hungry, not to stand upon Sauces, and your fine relishes; as to him that is in want, to step out into the highway, and to take a purse.

p. 35 And even yet to this day, mee thinkes I heare those little chickens, those poore pretty fooles, cry still peepe, peepe, within my bowels.

p. 38 quicke and noble disposition,

p. 115 Cherries
[In margin opposite this word Keats wrote] "Fruits/Pars pro toto."

p. 235 There is a drawing on this page.

CHARACTERS OF SHAKESPEAR'S PLAYS, BY WILLIAM HAZLITT.[1]

PUBLISHED FOR C. AND J. OLLIER. LONDON, 1817.

On the title-page, in Keats's handwriting: "John Keats." Also on the title-page, just below the author's name, Keats wrote and underlined:

"The mortal properties and scope of things
— he hath a kind of taste — somewhat grave to —"

In following Keats's underscorings and annotations in this volume, the passages of the text which Keats marked are printed in italics, double scorings have a line beneath the italicized text. Passages not in italics were not marked by Keats, and are only included where the sense of those marked would be obscure without them. Keats's marginal notes are printed in ordinary type, but preceded by the word "Note" in brackets, and indented; also, they are put between quotation marks.

p. 125. [Note at the end of the chapter on *The Tempest*] "I cannot help seeing Hazlitt like Ferdinand — 'in an odd angle of the Isle sitting — his arms in this sad knot.'"

The following passages are in the chapter on *King Lear*.

p. 153–154. *He was here fairly caught in the web of his own imagination. The passion which he has taken as his subject is that which strikes its root deepest into the human heart; of which the bond is the hardest to be unloosed; and the cancelling and tearing to pieces of which gives the greatest revulsion to the frame.* This depth of nature, this force of passion, this tug and war of the elements of *our being, this firm faith in filial piety, and the giddy anarchy and whirling tumult of the thoughts at finding this*

[1] Author's Collection.

prop failing it, the contrast between the fixed, immovable basis of natural affection, and the rapid, irregular starts of imagination, suddenly wrenched from all its accustomed holds and resting-places in the soul, this is what Shakespear has given, and what nobody else but he could give.

p. 154. [Lear's character] *It is his rash haste, his violent impetuosity, his blindness to everything but the dictates of his passions or affections, that produces all his misfortunes, that aggravates his impatience of them . . .*

p. 155. [Of Cordelia] . . . *the indiscreet simplicity of her love (which, to be sure, has a little of her father's obstinacy in it) . . .*

p. 157. [Of "the logic of passion" in *King Lear*] We see the ebb and flow of the feeling, its *pauses and feverish starts, its impatience of opposition, its accumulating force when it has time to recollect itself, the manner in which it avails itself of every passing word or gesture, its haste to repel insinuation, the alternate contraction and dilation of the soul.*

× [The cross indicates a Note at the bottom of the page] "This passage has to a great degree the hieroglyphic visioning." [1]

p. 158. [Of Lear's anguish as opposed to the cold cruelty of his older daughters] The contrast would be too painful, the shock too great, *but for the intervention of the Fool, whose well-timed levity comes in to break the continuity of feeling when it can no longer be borne, and to bring into play again the fibres of the heart just as they are growing rigid from overstrained excitement.*

× [The cross refers to a Note at the bottom of the page] "This is almost the last observation from Mr. Hazlitt. And is it really thus? Or as it has appeared to me! Does not the Fool by his very levity — give a finishing touch to the pathos; making what without him would be within our heart-reach nearly unfathomable. The Fool's words are merely the simplest translation of Poetry high as Lears.

'Since my young Ladies going into France
Sir, the Fool hath much pined away'"

p. 158. [This passage follows immediately upon the last] *The imagination is glad to take refuge in the half-comic, half-serious comments of the Fool, just as the mind under the extreme anguish of a surgical operation vents itself in sallies of wit.*

p. 158. [Of the Fool's character, and its use in the play] . . . it *carries pathos to the highest pitch of which* it is capable.

× [The Note to which this cross refers carries on the argument of the last Note] "Aye, this is it — most likely H. is right throughout. Yet is there not a little contradiction?"

p. 170. [After a quotation from the scene between Lear, Goneril, and Regan in Gloster's Castle] *If there is anything in any author like this yearning*

[1] See Vol. I, p. 382.

of the heart, these throes of tenderness, this profound expression of all that can be thought and felt in the most heart-rending situations, we are glad of it; but it is in some author we have not read.

p. 171. [After quoting various lines from *King Lear*] . . . are in a style of pathos, *where the extremest resources of the imagination are called in to lay open the deepest movements of the heart, which was peculiar to Shakespear.*

p. 171. *Indeed, the manner in which the threads of the story are woven together is almost as wonderful in the way of art as the carrying on the tide of passion.*

p. 175. *The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual; the explosions of his passions are terrible as a volcano: they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that rich sea, his mind, with all its vast riches.*

p. 176. *. . . we see not Lear, but we are Lear; . . . in the aberrations of his reason, we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodised from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will on the corruptions and abuses of mankind.*

p. 176. Tate has put his hook in this *Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the shewmen of the scene, to draw it about more easily.*

p. 177. *As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station, — as if at his years and with his experience, any thing was left but to die.*

p. 177. [The following passage is triple scored.] Four things have struck us in reading LEAR:

1. *That poetry is an interesting study, for this reason, that it relates to whatever is most interesting in human life. Whoever therefore has a contempt for poetry, has a contempt for himself and humanity.*

p. 177. 2. *That the language of poetry is superior to the language of painting; because the strongest of our recollections relate to feelings, not to faces.*

p. 177. 3. *That the greatest strength of genius is shewn in describing the strongest passions: for the power of the imagination, in works of invention must be in proportion to the force of the natural impressions, which are the subject of them.*

[Keats put two crosses to this passage, and wrote the following note in the margin] "If we compare the Passions to different tons and hogsheads of wine in a vast cellar — thus it is — the poet by one cup should know the scope of any particular wine without getting intoxicated — this is the highest exertion of Power, and the next step is to paint from memory of gone self storm."

p. 177. That the circumstance which balances the *pleasure against the pain in tragedy is, that in proportion to the greatness of the evil, is our sense and desire of the opposite good excited; and that our sympathy with actual suffering is lost in the strong impulse given to our natural affections, and carried away with the swelling tide of passion*, that gushes from and relieves the heart.

SHAKESPEARE'S GENIUS JUSTIFIED: BEING RESTORATIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF SEVEN HUNDRED PASSAGES IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS. BY Z. JACKSON.[1]

JOHN MAJOR. LONDON. 1819.

Z. Jackson seems to have been a particularly virulent type of the genus fool. In Macready's *Diaries*, there are two references to Jackson. In the first, Macready says: "A Mr. Zach. Jackson, with a play and a book on Shakespeare, called — one of those 'fools who rush in' to criticize, where modest knowledge shrinks from the sacredness of the temple." The second entry is as follows: "Mr. Z. Jackson called; one of the most adhesive and troublesome of all burrs or bores. I . . . had the pleasure of restoring to him an octavo volume of nonsense, which he calls corrections of Shakespeare's text."

Jackson's method is to quote a passage of Shakespeare and then alter it to suit a preconceived meaning of his own. His "explanations" are amusingly inept. In this book, Keats marked the passages which interested him with a cross only; underscorings, except in a single instance, are absent, and there are no marginal lines. There are, however, a number of brief notes, which I have indented and put between quotation marks. Italicized words are so in the text, inserted by Jackson. Only so much of the text is given as makes clear the meaning of Keats's notes.

On the title-page in Keats's handwriting is written: "W^m^ Haslam to John Keats."

p. 225. [From *King Henry V.* Act III, Scene II. Jackson quotes]

DAUPHIN. That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,
And *dout* them with superfluous courage.

[Jackson wishes "dout" changed to "and out."]

[Keats's cross is against the original quotation. His note is] "D'out, the same as d'on, d'off"

p. 243. [From *King Richard II.* Act III, Scene I. Jackson quotes]

BUCKINGHAM. You are *too senseless-obstinate*, my lord,
Too ceremonious and traditional:
Weight it but with the grossness of this age,

[Jackson wishes this passage altered to]

You are *to sense, less obstinate*, my lord:
Too ceremonious and traditional
Weight, is but with the grossness of this age:

[1] Author's Collection.

[Against this last passage, Keats wrote] "Can't be."

[Keats's cross is against the original quotation. His note is] "People were not so polite in those days — the first part of this passage explains the latter."

p. 250. [From *King Richard III.* Act V, Scene III. Jackson quotes]

K. RICHARD. Then he disdains to shine; for, by the book,
He should have *brav'd* the east an hour ago;

[Jackson alters "brav'd" to "brac'd."]

[Keats put crosses beside both the original quotation and Jackson's emendation. His note is] "perhaps gallows'd."

p. 251. [From *King Henry VIII.* Act I, Scene II. Jackson quotes]

BUCKINGHAM. I am the shadow of poor Buckingham;
Whose figure even this instant cloud puts on,
By dark'ning my clear sun.

[Keats has underlined "instant cloud," and put a cross against the passage. His note is] "Sometime we see a cloud that's dragonish &c."

p. 256. [From *King Henry VIII.* Act III, Scene III. Jackson quotes]

MAN. When suddenly a file of boys behind them, *loose shot*,

[Against this, Keats has written] "good."

p. 265. [From *Troilus and Cressida.* Act IV, Scene II. Jackson quotes]

TROILUS. Sleep, *kill* those pretty eyes.

[Jackson suggests] Sleep, *still* those pretty eyes.

[Beside this, in the margin, Keats has written] "O the falterer!"

p. 313. [From *Antony and Cleopatra.* Act V, Scene II. Jackson quotes]

CLEOPATRA. —— his rear'd arm
Crested the world.

[Jackson continues] The Commentators, under the conviction that this passage is correct, suppose Antony's *reared arm* to be in allusion to the manner in which our kings have been accustomed to confer the order of knighthood. But, I am rather inclined to think the passage corrupt: for how his arm was to *crest* the world, is such an hyperbole, that it goes beyond figure.

It is true, that the entire of this speech displays figures the most exaggerated that human imagination can conceive; but to each, excepting this, there is some corresponding similarity with nature. But, here, the hyperbole is lost, for the world could bear no crest; nor are we to suppose that the honour of knighthood was conferred on all mankind. As I have already observed, then, that the passage is corrupt, reflection confirms the opinion. I believe our Author wrote:

—— His rear'd arm *clefted* the world.

Thus, following up the powers of strength proportioned to the Colossus, whose *legs bestrid the* ocean, when his rear'd arm sunk with force, he would *split* the world:

[Keats put a cross against the original quotation, and in the margin, running up the page beside this egregious passage, he has written] "Doltish — 'tis a glorious simile from Heraldry." [Here follows a drawing of a conventionalized heraldic arm, bent back and holding a sword.]

PALMERIN OF ENGLAND [1]

BY FRANCISCO DE MORAES.

ANTHONY MUNDAY'S TRANSLATION, CORRECTED FROM THE ORIGINAL PORTUGUESE BY ROBERT SOUTHEY.

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME. LONDON. 1817.

This romance of chivalry was written in Portuguese about 1570. This copy of Southey's translation, in four volumes, has had a strange history. On the flyleaf of Vol. I is written in Leigh Hunt's handwriting: "The history of this copy of Palmerin of England is curious, and to us of the tribe of Hunt interesting. It was given to my eldest son when a child by my dear friend Keats; re-claimed among the books he left behind him in England by his bookseller owing to some undetermined arrangement; possessed afterwards by another friend and distinguished man, Hazlitt; and long after my return from Italy, found by me on a bookstall in Oxford Street, where I recognized Keats's marks and handwriting in the pages. All the marks in lead-pencil, enclosed by me (whether beside or under the print) in marks in ink, are his."

I cannot help thinking that Hunt's memory was playing him false when he said that Keats had given the book to Thornton Hunt. But in view of Taylor's letter to Keats just before he sailed, in which he charges a sum to the account of certain unspecified books delivered to Keats, it is possible that Keats looked upon the book as his. I do not believe this, however, precisely because the book is marked in pencil, Keats's habit being to mark his books with ink. Pencil marks could be rubbed out, which, if the volumes were borrowed, was an essential consideration. So convinced, or determined, was Hunt of the truth of his assertion that, on recovering the book, he wrote on the title-page: "Thornton Leigh Hunt, given him by John Keats, and restored to him after the lapse and accidents of many years by his loving father Leigh Hunt." Another thing which makes Hunt's statement as to the gift extremely problematical is that these volumes were among the books Keats left behind him on his departure for Italy. An unpublished letter from Brown to Taylor [2] makes this quite clear. The letter is dated "24th July 1821," and addressed to Hessey. Brown thanks Hessey for the loan of some books which he is returning, and adds: "They would not have been detained so long . . . had I known what books belonged to your house in Mr. Keats' trunk, as I wished to return them all together. The Ancient Drama and Palmerin of England I understand are your property, and therefore I can add those to the parcel."

Whether or not Hunt was mistaken as to the gift, I think there can be no doubt that he is correct in regard to the markings in the book. He probably

[1] In the possession of Lucius Wilmerding, Esq., of New York.
[2] Woodhouse Book. Morgan Collection.

saw the volumes many times during Keats's retention of them, and was perfectly familiar with their appearance. He may even have been present when some of the scorings were made. Keats seems to have kept the book for months; it was his habit with books borrowed from his publishers. A stronger reason to believe Hunt right in this particular, is the type of passage chosen for notice; no more sufficient evidence for the authorship of the pencil lines is needed.

Passages marked by John Keats and so certified by Leigh Hunt, occur especially in Vol. I; they are very numerous in that volume and are occasional in each of the three others. They are in a light stroke of his bad pencil. These strokes are vertical, in the margin along the passage indicated, and often quite irregularly straight, as if the page were held without full support and trembling beneath the pressure of the pencil. In addition, many phrases are marked instead by underscoring; and phrases within the already vertically marked passages are occasionally underscored also. In these cases, the pencil-stroke is not usually continuous beneath the word, but only a little part of each word is underlined. Often the strokes are very faint. In addition to reinforcing Keats's pencil lines with ink, Hunt generally wrote "Keats" at the bottom of those pages on which they occur. Other marginal lines in ink only, and without Hunt's direct attestation, were evidently not made by Keats. The passages so distinguished I have not reproduced.

In copying Keats's marked passages, I have printed the text of the book in italics, whether Keats marked it by a vertical marginal line or by underscoring. When a passage, or words within a passage, is double scored, I have indicated this double scoring by a line beneath the italicized text. Where it has been necessary to give parts of the text not marked by Keats, such parts are printed in ordinary type. In certain passages, I have paraphrased preceding or succeeding unmarked portions, and all such paraphrases, or interpolated words in marked passages where the sense as it stands is obscure, are enclosed in brackets. In a few cases, Hunt omitted to add his ink line to Keats's pencil mark, from inadvertence I suppose. As all the pencil strokes seem made by the same hand, I have included the passages to which they refer, but noted Hunt's omission.

VOL. I.

p. 3 *Leaving the court, he* [Don Duardos] *walked with her* [his wife Flerida] *into the forest, where the King his father had a royal palace; for that he supposed the sight of the spreading trees, and pleasant passages through the grassy groves, would be the occasion of the unminding of her former fits, and drive out of memory the sudden assaults that were incident to her feeble nature.*

p. 5 *. . . in a green meadow beside a brook, which with its clear running waters might have gladdened hearts not disposed to gladness.*

p. 8 *. . . a fair and clear river, . . . so clear that whosoever walked on its banks might count the white stones at the bottom.*

p. 9 [Of a tower in the middle of a river] *It was surrounded with tall poplars,*

which rose so thickly from the bed of the river, that they well nigh hid the tower from any who should look through them.

p. 43 ... *wringing their hands, and pulling their bonnets over their eyes.*

p. 53 ... *after he had considered honour and love, how the one was lasting in fame, and the other linked to an effeminate fancy.*

p. 57 [Pencil, two marks, not enclosed by Hunt] The thickness of the trees made his passage *more tenebrous than else it would have been.*

p. 63 *The sound of the waters was so loud and fearful that it dismayed all who heard, and the trees were dark and mournful, and the air filled with the rooks who had their nests upon them.*

p. 63–64 [Dido pictured slain] ... the workmanship so cunningly ordered ... *that you would have judged the fresh blood to drop from her fair body.*

p. 69 ... *till the dark night overshadowed him, where he espied two shepherds making a little fire of sticks to warm them, because the night was exceeding cold.* [Keats's line here is exceedingly faint, but Hunt has marked it.]

p. 71 ... *it is the nature of the heart to receive pleasure from those things which ought to give it, even though it knows them not.*

p. 77 ... *her love, which he bought as dearly as she gave it daintily: for proof let suffice what hereafter ensueth. But attend a strange and rare event: on a sudden was arrived in the emperor's palace, a comely damsel mounted on a courser as white as a swan, bearing trappings of the same colour of fringed velvet, powdered with little roses of gold, which were set in such order as greatly to adorn the palfrey. She wore a French robe of new invention, made for travelling, bordered with rolls of gold, interwoven one with the other; her hair fastened with a thread of the same colour, and thrown back, and a chaplet of bright flowers upon her head, which diffused a singular perfume.*

p. 78 ... the unanimity of thy friends to prosper in *longanimity* of high fortune. ["Longanimity" only is underlined, and against it Keats put an exclamation mark in the margin.]

p. 109 ... *he taught Libusante to sit his horse faster.*

p. 109 ... whose valour the one against the other was *no less cheerful to the beholders than delightful to themselves.*

p. 109 ... *the steed of Onistaldo had one of his fore-legs broken.*

p. 110 [The weaker of the combatants] *bare dishonour forth of the field.*

p. 111 ... every one was *driven into great admiration.*

p. 119 ... (being of the *cast of the giants,*)

p. 121 ... *wrongs toward women are not to be expected from you, whom nature hath so excellently gifted to redress them.*

p. 124 ... *a damsel suddenly chanced into the galley.*

p. 132 ... *night overcharging them with her uncomfortable hours.*

p. 153–154 *On the second day towards evening, being now far distant from Constantinople, he found himself in a valley full of thick trees, among which were certain old buildings in many parts fallen to ruin, yet in the little which appeared they gave sample of how noble a thing they had once been; within were galleries and apartments worthy to be inhabited, and without the walls were covered with ivy, so green and inwoven with the very stones, as not only to give adornment to the antiquity of the edifice, but also to preserve it from its total fall. About a stone's throw distant was a foun-*

tain of clear water, in so pleasant a place, that he could not choose but alight.

p. 155 *With this he paused awhile, weakness depriving him both of strength and breath to express the words which sorrow and love suggested. It was not long before he heard within the building the touch of a stringed instrument, which because it was somewhat distant he knew not presently what it might be; but anon the sound thereof coming under the trees, roused him, and going towards it he had not proceeded far within the building, before in one of the vaulted chambers he espied one sitting all in black, with a long beard, and a countenance shewing, by its sad complexion, that he had more mind to mourn than to any mirth; he was playing upon virginals of so loud a tone, that they could be heard in the field without; the harmony of which lingering in the hollows of the vaulted cieling, made so rare a sound that he who heard it was perforce led to listen, and to the forgetfulness of all other things. The knight of Fortune, transported at hearing him, leant against the door.*

p. 157 [The device upon his shield] *was a sepulchre in a sable field, death above guarding it.*

p. 157 . . . if I regret anything, it is that ought besides my own *sorrow should destroy me . . .*

p. 157 . . . *suffice it for the test of your truth, that you have been so ill able to maintain it.*

p. 158 . . . being so desirous of death, *that he would have given it to himself, if he had not thought that in so doing he should have sinned against that sorrowful remembrance from which he alway expected it.*

p. 161 . . . *a tomb of black marble, whereon the whole history of her life was inscribed, and upon the tomb Death was sculptured, as hideous as he is always pourtrayed. This rare piece of workmanship he laid in a chariot and led into the field.*

p. 165 . . . *That sorrow which is without hope hath no cure.*

p. 165–166 [A knight] . . . armed in arms of *red and white, with silver waves,* and bearing in his *shield a white bull in a grey field.*

p. 166 *The third gave his the spur, and met the knight of the Bull with such force that both were left on foot in the middle of the bridge; he who kept the pass held the reins fast, and sprang up again as lightly as though he had never lost his seat.*

p. 171 . . . fortune directed his course to the Sorrowful Valley where Paudricia abode in her house of sadness. *To this name all things were conformable; the trees dark and gloomy, the air damp and overshadowed, the waters of the river mournful both in colour and in sound; in one part where the river formed a dark, smooth, silent pool, there was a knight under some thick willow tree, of great stature, armed in plated mail of black and yellow, without other mixture; in his shield a white swan in a field sable;* he rode upon a grey horse.

p. 172 The knight of the Valley . . . *blew a horn which hung from one of the trees, which was heard afar, and it seemed as if the sorrowfulness of the place extended even to things inanimate; for the sound was more dolorous than delightful.*

p. 173–174 ... the knight of the Swan accounting himself *well mated*, and the knight of the Savage Man *indifferently matched.*

p. 175 ... *thinking that the best thing in misery is to have many who partake it.*

p. 184 The knight of Death on the next morning came forth before his tent, *attired in black armour, whereon was painted in divers places, the resemblance of a woman's face seen through shrubs, and in his shield was figured a knight of sorrowful aspect, surrounded by many deaths, who all fled from him; the whole so naturally pourtrayed, as moved the beholders to fear of those ugly anatomies, and compassion of the man. He sat upon a dark flame-coloured horse, leaning upon his lance.*

p. 185 *He came to the gate of the lists in arms of silver and grey, with silver doves so cunningly rivetted on, that the whole appeared one piece.*

p. 186 The knight of Death ... in denying that *which was his right and tille to have, smote down five other knights before he took food.*

p. 187 ... a knight, *whose armour was beset all with green spheres, bearing in his shield likewise a sphere of the same colour; he rode upon a roan horse stained with blood, which made him look the fairer.*

p. 189 ... *let not the lie of another be mighty enough to overpower this truth.*

p. 189 ... they loose their swords, now so blunted that they could not cut with them, and grappled *body to body;* in which struggle their *wounds opened.*

p. 192 ... *bear new arms of green and white, all beset with pelicans of gold, every one holding in their bills a heart as haughty as his own courage. His shield also was answerable thereto, bearing in the midst a golden pelican, upon a ground of sinople.* [After "sinople" Hunt has written "Red earth."]

p. 193 ... *a knight mounted on a mulberry courser* and attired in *green armour, which was all hacked and hewed.*

p. 212 ... in these thoughts, *sad one hour and sadder another,* he travelled on.

p. 229–230 *Do but remember, impatience brings sorrow, sorrow sickness, sickness consumption, consumption the miserable anatomy of himself, which is a terror to his kindred, an eyesore to his friends, and the continual heart-breaking of all that love him: on the other side, if a man apply himself to any exercise, as either travel for the honour of himself and fame of his country, or spending his time in martial exploits, or according as his estate is; the poor to take pains, the rich pain with pleasure, the artificer and such to their handy crafts, the noble mind and courtly gentleman either to the exploits of the field or such exercise as may avoid idleness; — then is the eye directed, the sense quickened, the mind preserved, the heart quieted, the conscience unpolluted, affection governed, love bridled, and lust banished; the good name perfected, virtue established, honour well exercised, and fame eternized. Think thus with thyself; while Altea lived I loved her, being dead I remember her, and in her love I live for her, as the honour I will enterprize shall witness.*

p. 248 ... *the very spot where Polendos, King of Thessaly, had found him. The calmness and the beauty of that day then came into his mind, and the*

fair galley in which he had glided along the coast, and the regular stroke of its oars.

p. 251 ... *after them, upon a huge mulberry coloured horse, a giant of bigness out of measure, armed in strong white armour, without any adornment soever. In his shield he bore three giants heads in a bloody field, being in memory of other three whom he had fought and slain in field, one to one.*

p. 253 [The sound of the wounded giant's voice] *echoed for a while in the hollow which the sea had worn in the rocks around.*

p. 253 [The fall of the giant's huge body] seemed like the *fall of a tower.*

p. 260–261 But the darkness soon became such, and the fear because of it which each felt lest he *should strike his companion, that perforce they left off battle, and all fell to the ground senseless, their memory and feelings being taken from them by enchantment. Presently the cloud opened, and the knight of Fortune saw them all four upon a bier, which was laid upon a chariot, and drawn by four black horses through the air.*

p. 289 ... the report of noble deeds doth urge the minds of the courageous to be equal with those who bear most commendation of their approved valiency. *And this is the good fruit of imagination and of ancient histories.*

p. 319 ... *he bore in his shield a starry sky. The armour of Vasiliardo was green, thick beset with lions of gold, bearing in his shield for his device an eagle with bloody talons. Francian had his armour resembling little flames of fire; in his shield likewise a fire in a field sable, so to the life that it seemed as if they were indeed flames, which yet did not burn him. Dridem was armed in black and yellow, with grey griffins thereon, bearing in his shield the tower of Babylon, drawn from the life in a field sanguine.*

p. 319 *Frisol had his armour red, with black joints.*

p. 320 ... their armour white, and *golden fruit of the arbutus in a green field upon their shields.*

p. 320 ... armour black, whereon was cunningly *bespread silver tears.*

p. 321 ... armour green, whereon was figured many *golden poppies, and in his shield he bare Troy Town.*

p. 321 Goarim was in white armour, ... bearing in his shield a peacock, *as beautifully blazoned as that bird is by nature.*

p. 321 ... *their devices were all alike, which was the smoaky forge and anvil of god Vulcan the smith.*

p. 323 And as by this time the hurt which their swords could do was not *answerable to the will with which they wielded them,* they laid hands on each other.

p. 325 ... *in the semblance of an aged man, upon a serpent huge and fearful to behold; and bearing in his hand a wand of fire, with which he touched them, and incontinently they all fell senseless to the ground.*

p. 343–344 ... *night overtook him at the foot of a mountain hard by in a valley, whose freshness the darkness overshadowed and concealed; he espyed a little pavilion, wherein were lighted torches; this moved him to take his way thither, to see what it might be: as he drew nigh he perceived none within except a dead knight stretched upon a bier.*

p. 346 ... *looking at him more wistfully, on a sudden his heart smote him, as if he knew the face.*

p. 372 ... *when they had recovered they embraced each other over and over again, as though they had just met after long separation.*

p. 376 *The king was so joyful a man, that those grey hairs of his which had borne so many sorrows, seemed rather to belong to another, than to one who had endured so much.*

p. 391 *Thus between tears and pleasant talk, he passed this remembrance in his thoughts.*

p. 412 ... *a mist on a sudden arose in the hall as that the lights were dim and ready to go out, the torches scarcely burned, one person could not see another, and the ladies being so dismayd caught hold every one of who was nearest her.*

p. 412 ... a lion and a *tyger enduring a great fight together.*

p. 413 ... *the hall seemed falling in ruins, and with the violence of that shock they fell to the ground, breathing from their mouths an horrible and ugly black smoke, with the which the air was left as dark as it was before.*

p. 416 *Flerida gazed upon her husband in such agitation as pleasure as well as pain occasions, when it comes suddenly.*

p. 417 The king, *whose age could not bear so great joy,* fell back upon his chair.

On the first page of the flyleaf at the end of the volume, continuing his note on the front flyleaf, Hunt has written: "And so are the words of reference on the other side of this leaf, and all others of like handwriting." The words on the other side of the leaf which Hunt attributes to Keats are as follows:

Chapter 6 The funeral image — The Castle of Sadness.
" 21 The Sorrowful Valley
" 23 The Battle of Four Knights

VOL. II.

p. 128 *The ninth knight advanced, in grey arms with scallops of gold, and upon a mulberry-coloured horse, being of better countenance than those who had adventured before him.*

p. 129 *Presently the tenth advanced, in arms of red and carnation, with roses of silver rivetted upon them.*

p. 129–130 *He rode a spotted gray horse, with arms of gold and green in quarters, and among a thousand devices and galantries upon his shield, bore a lion in a field or,*[1] *tearing in pieces a white stag.*

p. 215 ... *he came up and beheld a knight endeavouring to force her, and two others sitting by on horseback, laughing to see her defend herself.*

p. 235 ... *many times they came so close as to dig at each other with the pummel of their swords.*

p. 235 So cruelly *martyred* the armour.

p. 362 ... *there entered the hall a damsel large of body, clad in rich apparel, but little goodly; behind her three giants, of bigness out of measure, whose armour was of one colour and fashion, their bodies being covered with plates of steel, so huge and strong, that it seemed impossible for anything to demolish them; their helmets, which were carried by three men, were*

[1] This word is italicized in the text.

made of a white bone surpassing smooth, and so hard that its strength was yet more to be admired than that of their arms; their faces, which were unarmed, nature had made so ugsome and terrible . . .

p. 367 . . . a loud and fearful voice which *filled the hall.*

p. 370 *The giants Albuzarco and Albaroco, companions of Barrocante, refused to accept the battle; answering, that if there were no giants for them to deal withal, more knights should be given them, for one to one they would not enter the lists. But he of the Desert, who on such occasions was not wont to have much patience, took Albuzarco by the arm, saying, Thou mismade and overgrown thing . . .*

p. 371 . . . *calling for their helmets.*

p. 374 When they were placed in the lists, the judges *divided the sunshine between them.*

p. 374 As if the earth *were opening.*

p. 375 . . . came to the ground with the *saddles between their legs.*

p. 377 . . . *what is greatly desired is alway doubted.*

p. 379 Albaroco, *despairing of life, fought like one dead, thinking that sometimes the only remedy for life is to expect none.*

p. 380 *Would that I had here him who conquered Dramuziando and all the guardians of his castle, and would that here were with him four of the best knights on the earth, so losing my life on them,* I might the better brook my fortune.

p. 383 *I had rather owe you this love in death, than live and remain bound to you and dishonoured.*

p. 384 . . . *new reverses, overcoming all the power of fortune.*

VOL. III.

p. 10 . . . he found himself in the midst of a little island, *enclosed round about with a water so black and deep, that it seemed as if it came from the centre of the earth. In the midst of this islet Palmerin espied an old withered tree, and underneath it stood a knight armed in his own lost armour, with his sword likewise in his hand, who said unto him . . .*

p. 14 At last, in one part where the waters made a *resting-place, he espied a boat, having four oars in it, which were handled and governed by four beasts of marvellous bigness, each one tied with a mighty chain, and at the poop sat a mighty lion, all imbrued in blood, as though he were master of the passage, who fed himself with nothing else but the flesh of his passengers.*

p. 15 . . . *his companions, the rowers.*

p. 17 *Being thus confounded, presently he saw an old and broken basket lowered down to him from the top of the rock, by a rope which was so weak and slender, that he thought the mere weight of the basket would have broken it.*

p. 18 . . . he got into the basket, and without seeing any one to hoist him, was raised into the air, but with *so slow and swaying a motion, that the delay doubled his fear. And now when he was at a great height, he saw that the basket began to break, and the cord give way with the weight, and untwist itself, so that at last nothing but a single thread was left, which was*

almost invisibly small. Certes, though he had already suffered many fears, this was the worst of all, for he saw himself in the last extremity, being suspended in heaven by a single hair.

p. 19 ... [The moon] *having no clouds to oppose or obscure her, began to rise in the East with a splendour which seemed almost unnaturally bright.*

p. 30 ... *the preparations seemed made to the end that there was no end to them.*

p. 101 ... *keep thy words for one who is afraid of thy deeds.*

p. 104 The *moon was up, and the battle could be seen distinctly; and the damsel seeing this great misfortune, gave herself up for lost: it being natural, when fear is at the height, that despair should accompany it, especially in women, whose courage is so little that their presence of mind fails in every thing, except in things of appetite; for then their sudden determinations are better than what the wisest man in the world could devise after long reflection.*

p. 104 ... the sword bit in [to the shield] so deep that it reached through to the handle; he let it fall, and Baleato *drew it to him, hanging on his sword.*

p. 121 ... *it was her wont to arise in the cool of the morning, that she might enjoy the early songs of the nightingale, and other birds.*

p. 124 *Some men in love commend their happiness,*
their quiet, sweet, and delicate delight;
And I can boast of fortune's frowardness,
her extreme rigour, and severe despight.
But for the sweetness other men have felt,
I came too late, my part was elsewhere dealt.

p. 235 ... *it is the nature of women to desire to see novelties, and go pilgrimages.*

p. 243 ... *a giant, of bigness out of all measure, covered with plates of black steel, which were of great strength. He carried a huge and heavy shield, which was bound with hoops of steel, exceeding strong; and bore in a field sable, some dark and gloomy trees.*

p. 243 ... the others were as *much sustained by the presence of the giant, as by their own force.*

p. 251 ... *they who rule by fear are flattered openly and abhorred in secret.*

p. 251 [Of the giantess] ... *her eyes always seemed bloody, and her lips were thick and rolled back, so that her teeth were seen.*

p. 253 ... *for he is wanted in the lists.*

p. 255 [The knights on their horses] ran their career with such a *thundering sound, as if the earth would have opened beneath them.*

p. 258 ... *they tried more to save themselves than to hurt their enemies.*

p. 259 ... Struck off his head and *shewed it to Colambar.*

p. 259 ... the giant *resented great pain, thinking that his sister held his death so certain, that she would not wait to see the issue of the battle.*

p. 259 ... [The knight of the Tyger knew] *whence his strength came.*

p. 260 ... *as if the giant had not deserved to have longer time bestowed upon him.*

p. 260 ... *till at length he fell upon the ground, and yielded up his soul to the devil.*

p. 283 [Of the branches of great trees] . . . *there was such a delicate shadow, and of such quality and nature, that in the hottest calm of summer they always moved with the wind.*

p. 284 [Of a rockery] . . . from the top there opened *pipes of water, which fell from stone to stone, and were so curiously devised, that the sound of the water upon the stones presented whatever harmony the nightingales and all other sweet birds make in the season when it is sweetest to listen to them.*

p. 284 [Of a crystal basin at the foot of a rock] . . . *the eyes were not more delighted with beholding it, than the understanding was confounded in devising how it had been wrought.*

p. 286–289 . . . the outer walls thereof were wrought with such subtle *gallantries in white and hard marble, that it would have seemed full difficult to execute the like in yielding wax. It had a lofty spire covered with tiles of many colours, so bright that the sight could not tarry long enough upon them to determine what they were; when they were eyed at distance, and so became more endurable, all that could be distinguished was, that one colour gave beauty to another, and that all were perpetually shifting their hues.*

p. 289 [Of a magical image of a giant] . . . as if he had been a living body *took him in his arms, and having thrown him down the two steps to the ground, returned again to his post.*

p. 289–290 . . . for an *image of gold* which stood over the doorway, and was made after the likeness of an old woman, clad in the manner of old times *called out to them both to do their duty.*

p. 291 . . . the *image* that stood above, in the presence of them all, *opened a little coffer* which she held in her lap.

p. 292 . . . sumptuous *shelves and desks of gold, and the desks being supported with birds and beasts of antique work, all of the same metal.*

p. 388 [Of the plight of the knight of the Damsels' and Florendos' horses after the combat] *His of the Damsels had his shoulder broken, that of Florendos burst open at the breast.* [Keats has put a question mark against this passage.]

p. 388 If you are dissatisfied that you have not *overthrown me at your pleasure, I might have had the same reason for discontent in regard to you, if I regarded nothing more than the desire of victory.*

p. 390 [A knight overhears another boasting that he is master of his affections, which words seemed to the listener] . . . *to come from one who was at liberty, and to whom love could do neither good nor evil. But he himself desired not to live in such liberty.*

p. 391 . . . *if I win her she will be mistress of me, but if she remain with you, I know not that she will be mistress of herself.*

p. 392 . . . *I do not hold her to be of such poor understanding as that for a man so free as you she should be willing to reject a will so devoted as mine.*

p. 399 [Two knights are apparently dead, Florendos questions the slayer, who replies:] . . . *this one who is still moving would have carried away the shield of the lady Miraguarda.*

VOL. IV.

"Wm Hazlitt" is written on the flyleaf of this volume.

p. 91 *In this I know that I am asking much; but the faith and love with which I have ever served you embolden me, and that faith is so proud of what it thinks it has merited, that it cannot be contented with any recompense given by another.*

p. 181 *And as men whose hearts have been long free, when they devote them at last are more devoted than such as have been used to such devotement, so it was with this knight.*

p. 181 ... he had no other food there than his *own imaginations, which would sooner destroy than support him.*

p. 184 [A bull] ran at him, and *as he thought tost him with such force as to send him as high as the top of the rocks.*

p. 185 ... *filled the place with loud and mighty cries, calling upon the statues to defend her against the intruder that was come to violate her palace. At this cry the images began to stir themselves, and to lay hold on their swords; but when the knight of the Savage Man made offer to defend himself, they stood silent in their former estate.*

p. 186 ... *having with her four knights clad in costly armour, to whom she complained of him.*

p. 195 ... *and this thought* [of putting on beautiful garments and showing herself to her friends in them] *made her long more to be among them, than the regret with which she remembered them, though that was great.*

p. 195 [Of vanity in women] ... *so strong is this passion in them that nothing can equal it.*

p. 195 ... more for the sake of appearing *better* than the other princesses, than of appearing *well.*

p. 255 [Of slashings in a lady's dress] ... *these openings were in some places gathered up with golden twist, and set round with jewelry, and the whole was worked in tambour a full palm deep round about.*

p. 261 ... he returned again to the lady *of whom he besought pardon for having failed in this third joust, and promised that the fourth should make amends. At this Albayzar could hardly contain himself, the pride with which the knight treated this matter provoking him as much as the overthrow of his own warriors.*

p. 262 ... I am little pleased at not having overthrown you; *but the fault is in my horse; he is so sore laboured with travel, that he can hardly perform his duty.*

p. 264 *Now that I have accomplished the challenge on this lady's behalf, and am free from the conditions thereof, if you will grant licence to any more of your knights, and give me lances, I will joust here till night, or so long as my horse is able to hold out.*

p. 265 Making you yourself seek the payment, and *ask for vengeance upon yourself, which, in this request, you are full certain to meet with.*

p. 266 ... *armed himself in armour of black polished steel, without any mixture; his helmet and shield were of the same fashion, and were, in the judgment of those knights, the best they had ever seen.*

p. 267 ... the lance point glanced off again, and *entered the vizor of his*

helmet, with such force as to wound him and make him fall back on his horse; and as he held the reins tight, the horse reared and fell back, falling upon him, whereby he was so sorely hurt, that he was borne senseless from the field.

p. 269 *Then taking off his helmet he discovered himself, a gentle person, and flushed with what he had done.*

p. 282 *. . . a trumpet which Framustante blew.*

p. 285 *He followed her like one bereft of his understanding, and addressed himself to her in that state with words indicating his intentions, calling her Polinarda, whom he believed her to be.*

p. 287 *. . . at such times the heart divines its sorrows, and it seemeth that it forbodes evil with more certainty than good.*

p. 303 . . . the farewell was given with *so many tears, that there was neither room for words nor compliments; some, however, were shown to Armenia; for as they knew her not, and therefore had no friendship for her, there was neither love nor sorrow to take place of these forms.*

p. 319 [Of Framustante and the other seven giants] . . . *being of such huge stature that they far overtopped all others in the army, and their harnesses and helmets flashing over the field far away, as the sun shone on them.*

p. 323 . . . failing at their lances, met in such manner together with their *bodies, like two towers,* that both horses and men were sent to the ground.

p. 338 *Baroldo at length came to the place where his father lay slain; there he found Almourel: that true and loyal giant had lost his helmet, his hair was hanging loose about his bloody face, his eyes were full of tears, and tears and blood were streaming down his face together, and the whole countenance of the man was so terrible, that it struck fear into any one. He had taken his sword in both hands, and was fighting right valiently, and crying aloud for sorrow all the while.*

p. 349 . . . some died in consequence, *by reason that their wounds filled with wind, and their weakness waxing more . . .*

p. 360 *They marched into the field without voice or sound, silently, so that the very silence made them seem not to be earthly.*

p. 361 *. . . judging that they who came out to battle, so unlike living men, would fight like men that did not desire to continue such.*

p. 361 *. . . for like men who knew that defeat must betide them, they came mourning already for their own destruction: and since the gods had given them this day of vengeance, which had been so long withheld, he bade them now avail themselves of favourable fortune.*

p. 362 *What did the mourning with which the walls of Constantinople were hung signify, but that the city already gives itself up as yielded into the hands of its conquerors? And since it was in their hands to win all, or in their weakness to lose all . . .*

p. 371 . . . it was a pitiful sight to behold, how the women and children came *to look for protection among them, and how old men with grey heads and white beards, being so weak and feeble with age that they were fain to support themselves with their staves, desired that they might rather enter the battle, and there end their lives, than live to see this last succour perish, and then be miserably butchered with the women.*

p. 394 [After the combat, in which Framustante was killed by Dramuzi-

ando] Dramuziando was left in such plight, that not being able to support himself *he sate down upon the body of Framusante.*

p. 395 *Finding none near him to whom he could say these things, he began in his despair to display new strength, laying on such mortal strokes that in short time he had made much slaughter.*

p. 396 [Dramuziando's enemies] . . . threw spears at him from a distance, *as if he had been a bull.*

p. 396 *Having said this, such weakness came over him that he sate down again upon Framusante.*

p. 400 . . . *the roaring of the flame was heard afar off, and the crash of walls in their downfall, which had been built to stand forever, was terrible.*

p. 405 . . . *seeing as it were all the world dead,* he longed to bear them company.

p. 420 *Daliarte sailing with wind at will . . .*

TITLES OF HONOR.[1]

BY THE LATE FAMOUS AND LEARNED ANTIQUARY
JOHN SELDEN OF THE INNER TEMPLE, ESQUIRE.
THE THIRD EDITION CAREFULLY CORRECTED. LONDON. 1672.

On the title page, in Keats's handwriting: "John Keats. 1819."

On both sides of the flyleaf, Keats has begun what was evidently intended to be an index. An alphabet in double columns, with ample spaces between the letters, takes up the whole of both sides of the leaf, but there are only two entries. Under A. Keats has written: "Atheling Page 499"; and under R: "Reliefs Page 515."

Keats's marks in this volume consist, except for two underscorings, of marginal lines only, and there are no notes. Since there has been no necessity to add any more of the text to the passages marked, I have merely given these passages, without markings of any kind. Italicized words are so in the text, and have nothing to do with Keats.

p. 498. For in those times the affectation of making words out of that little Greek they had, was frequent here in *England.*

p. 515. [The beginning of this passage is in Anglo-Saxon, which is odd, as there is no reason to suppose that Keats could read Anglo-Saxon. It continues] That is *an* Earls *Relief is eight Horse, four saddled and four unsaddled, four Helms, four Coats of Mail, four Spears, as many Shields, four Swords, and* CC *Marks of Gold.*

p. 516. [Two pages here are wrongly numbered. This page is printed as 508.] The Bel-house may denote the Hall which was the place of ordinary diet and entertainment in the houses of Lords. It may well so signifie, if the *Saxons* used the like reason in imposing the name on the Lords Hall, as some say the *Italian, Spanish,* and *French* have done in

[1] Author's Collection

calling it *Tinello*, *Tinelo*, and *Tinel*, which in our Laws also is retein'd in *Tinel le roy*, for *the Kings' Hall*.

p. 525. Deo & beato *Æthelwoldo*.

p. 525. *Rex & omnes Regni Magnates ad Parliamentum tunc fuerant* (as *Brampton's* words are that relates it. And they *super hoc* (saith he) *consilio inter eos deliberato ipsum coram Rege pro gratia obtinenda secum duxerunt, sed statim cum Rex eum intuitus esset, de proditione & morte* Alfredi *fratris sui ipsum appellavit in hæc verba.* Proditor *Godwine*, Ego te appello de morte *Alfredi* fratris mei quem proditionalitèr occidisti. *Tum* Godwinus *excusando respondit*, Domine mi Rex salva reverentia & gratia vestra, pace, & dominatione, fratrem vestrum nunquam prodidi nec occidi; unde super hoc pono me in consideratione Curiæ vestræ. *Tunc dixit Rex, Clarissimi Domini* Comites & Barones *terræ* (where *Barones* denotes Thanes) *qui estis homines mei ligii modo hic congregati & appellum meum responsumque* Godwini *audiistis; Volo quod inter Nos in ista appellatioue rectum judicium decernatis & debitam Justitiam faciatis. Comitibus vero & Baronibus super hoc adinvicem tractantibus, quidam inter eos justo judicio faciendo diversimodo sentiebant. Alii enim dicebant, quod nunquam per Homagium, servitium, seu fidelitatem* Godwinus *Regi extitit alligatus & ideò Proditor suus non fuit, & quod ipsum etiam manibus suis non occiderat. Alii verò dixerunt quod Comes, nec Baro, nec aliquis Regi subditus bellum contra Regem in appellatione sua de lege potest vadiare, sed in toto ponere in misericordia sua & emendas sibi offerre competentes. Tunc* Leofricus *Consul* Cestriæ, *probus homo quoad Deum & Seculam, dixit; Comes, inquit* Godwinus, *post Regem est homo melioris parentelæ totius Angliæ & dedicere non potest quin per consilium suum* Alfredus *frater Regis interemptus fuit, unde pro me considero quod ipsemet & filius suus & nos omnes* XII *Comites qui amici & consanguinei sui sumus coram Rege humiliter procedamus onerati cum tanto auro & argento quantum inter brachia sua quilibet nostrum poterit bajulare, illud sibi pro suo transgressu offerendo & suppliciter deprecando. Et ipse malevolentiam suam rancorem & iram Comiti condonet, & acceptis homagio suo & fidelitate terras suas sibi integre restituat & retradat.*

p. 526. *Rex contradicere nolens quicquid judicaverunt...*

p. 536. [Of the charter which created Geoffrey of Mandeville Earl of Essex, which he appears to have received from both Queen Matilda and King Stephen. Selden says that he] was created, it seems by both as some others were.

APPENDIX D

FRAGMENT OF THE JOURNAL LETTER TO GEORGE AND GEORGIANA KEATS. FEBRUARY–MAY, 1819.[1]

On Monday evening, November tenth, of this current year (1924), there was sold as part of the collection of the late William Harris Arnold, the following fragment of the long journal letter from Keats to his brother George in America. This fragment has never before been published anywhere, to my knowledge, with the exception of a very small portion which was reproduced in the sale catalogue. In Buxton Forman's Complete Edition, after the entry in this letter of "Saturday 13 March" is an editorial note which reads as follows: "At this point there is a break in the manuscript arising from the fact that Keats overlooked a sheet when he despatched the budget to his brother and sister-in-law. Fortunately, however, some sort of transcript was made by Mr. Jeffrey, and from that the missing passage can be tolerably well restored. Keats ultimately discovered his omission, and sent the omitted sheet on with another batch, having first added an explanatory paragraph under a new date, as will be seen later on." What Buxton Forman printed as Mr. Jeffrey's transcript is entirely unlike this fragment, of which the only explanation seems to be either that this is not the part enclosed by Keats to George in his letter of the following September, or that the part I give was not kept with the rest. As Mr. Jeffrey's transcript has no fresh date and the new part has, and as the new part joins, with a little lapping, to that given two pages farther on by Buxton Forman, I believe that Mr. Jeffrey confused what George had originally received with the sheet which was afterwards sent, at the same time leaving out a large portion of the separated sheet by accident. That the letter was carelessly copied is proved by the date of the first entry which was also in the Arnold Collection. Mr. Jeffrey gave this date as February twenty-fourth, a date which I have already shown to be wrong.[2] In the holograph, it is very clearly written "Feby 14."

To read the letter as Keats originally wrote it, I am quite sure we should find no break where Buxton Forman has placed one, but should consider the two pages which immediately follow it as having been written on Saturday, March thirteenth, and put this new fragment where the September extract appears. The new fragment should then run to "this morning" where I have begun to quote in the text;[3] in fact "this morning" appears as the last two words on the recovered sheet. In the holograph, this fragment exactly fills both sides of a small octavo sheet of paper, and a number of such sheets might easily become misplaced, particularly as from the other fragment in the Arnold sale, which is in quarto, we see that Keats wrote this letter on sheets of varying sizes. Two large holes in the middle of the sheet have made some words conjectural, while some have disappeared entirely. What it has been possible to read is given here. Luckily most of the fragment is intact.

[1] Author's Collection. [2] See Vol. II, p. 181. Note. [3] Vol. II, p. 191.

"17th. Wednesday.
On Sunday I went to Davenport's where I dined — and had a nap. I cannot have a day annihilated in that manner — there is a great difference between an easy and an uneasy indolence. An indolent day fill'd with speculations even of an unpleasant colour is bearable and even pleasant doing when one's thoughts cannot find out anything better in the world; and experience has told us that locomotion is no change: but to have nothing to do, and to be surrounded with unpleasant human identities; who press upon one just enough to prevent one getting into a lazy position; and not enough to interest or rouse one; is a capital punishment of a capital crime: for is not giving up, through good nature, one's time to people who have no light and shade a capital crime? Yet what can I do? they have been very kind and attentive to me. I do not know what I did on monday — nothing — nothing — nothing. I wish this was anything extraordinary — Yesterday I went to town; I called on Mr. Abbey; he began again (he has done it frequently lately) [*torn*] that [*torn*]ing concern saying he wish you had hea[*torn*]ed to it: he wants to make me a H[atter] — I really believe 'tis all interested: for from the manner he spoke withal and the card he gave me I think he is concerned in [hatt]ing himself. He speaks well of Fanny's health. Hodgkinson is married — From this I think he takes a little Latitude. Mr. A. was waiting very impatiently for his return to the counting house — and meanwhile observed how strange it was that Hodgkinson should have been not able to walk two months ago and that now he should be married. — 'I do not,' says he 'think it will do him any good: I should not be surprised if he should die of a consumption in a year or [two]. I called at Taylor's, and found that he and Hilto[n] had set out to dine with me: so I followed them immediately back — I walk'd with them townwards again as far as Cambden Town and smoak'd home a segar — this morning I have been reading the 'False one.' I have been up to Mrs. Bentley's — shameful to say I was in bed at ten — I mean this morning. The Blackwood's review has committed themselves in a scandalous heresy — they have been putting up Hogg the ettrick shepherd against Burns — the senseless villains. I have not seen Reynolds Rice or any of our set lately. Reynolds is completely buried in the law: he is not only reconciled to it but hobbyhorses upon it. Blackwood wanted very much to see him — the scotch cannot manage by themselves at all — they want imagination — and that is why they are so fond of Hogg who has so little of it.
Friday 19th. Yesterday I got a black eye — the first time I took a Cr[icket] b[a]t. Brown who is always one's friend in a disaster [*torn*] tied a le[*torn*] the eyelid, and there is no infl[amm]ation this morning, though the ball hit me on the sight — 'twas a white ball — I am glad it was not a clout. This is the second black eye I have had since leaving school — during all my [scho]ol days I never had one at all — we must eat a peck before we die. This morning"

Clarke, in recollection, thinks that the encounter with the butcher took place about the time that Keats read the *Eve of St. Agnes* to him. But evidently what induced his belief was the remembrance of Keats's black eye.

The passage of time had left in Clarke's mind both the black eye and the fight, but the cricket ball had vanished entirely. It would seem, from what Keats says of there having been a previous black eye, as though the fight must have been an earlier occurrence. Probably, from the fact that George mentions it also, it should be attributed to some time before the Summer of 1818.

This letter makes Keats's chronic fatigue at this time very evident. Taylor's suggestion that Keats might take up the trade of hatter crops up again in the following Autumn.[1] The mention of the cigar is curious. This is the only mention of Keats having smoked throughout his entire correspondence.

[1] See Vol. II, p. 316.

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